



~~50.1877.~~

38472 e. 155



# CHESS & CHESS-PLAYERS:

CONSISTING OF

Original Stories and Sketches.



BY

GEORGE WALKER.

LONDON:

CHARLES J. SKEET, PUBLISHER,

27, KING WILLIAM STREET, CHARING CROSS.

---

1850.

**LONDON:**

**PRINTED BY MYERS AND CO., KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN.**

TO HIS FRIEND,

JOHN RHODES, ESQUIRE,

OF

POTTER NEWTON HOUSE, LEEDS,

*This Volume*

IS

DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

## CONTENTS.

---

	Page.
<u>THE CHESS AUTOMATON</u> . . . . .	1
<u>DESCHAPELLES THE CHESS KING</u> . . . . .	38
<u>A NIGHT IN YORK</u> . . . . .	61
<u>CHESS WITHOUT THE CHESS-BOARD</u> . . . . .	106
<u>THE CAFE DE LA REGENCE</u> . . . . .	148
<u>RUY LOPEZ THE CHESS BISHOP; A Legend of Spain</u> . . . . .	185
<u>MATED AND CHECKMATED; An Oriental Sketch</u> . . . . .	209
<u>A GAME OF CHESS WITH NAPOLEON</u> . . . . .	247
<u>VINCENZIO THE VENETIAN</u> . . . . .	291
<u>THE LIGHT AND LUSTRE OF CHESS</u> . . . . .	330
<u>BATTLES OF LA BOURDONNAIS AND MC DONNELL</u> . . . . .	364

## P R E F A C E.

---

THESE sketches were first published, years since, in various magazines and journals; and are now presented in a volume, as a partial retrospect of the dark days that are gone; when the march of Chess was in its infancy.

In writing these papers, my object was to place the King of Sports before the public at large, in somewhat bolder relief, by entwining Chess with Romance:—the union going at times terribly against the grain—both hacks having been little used to run in double harness, and therefore not always taking the collar kindly. Reading the sheets now for press, as a whole, I observe certain undesirable repetitions of thought and phrase, occasionally; consequent, I believe, on the confined nature of my theme—the detached character of the essays—and the great space of time over which their original appearance was distributed. But the book must go as it is.

“Other times, other cares.” I look back with pride on the services my pen may have rendered Chess; but I write no more in the cause. A quiet observer only, now, of CHESS and CHESS PLAYERS, I find the latter fully capable of sounding their own trumpets.

G. W.

*Stock Exchange, 1850.*

## THE CHESS AUTOMATON.

“ Doubtless, the pleasure is as great  
Of being cheated, as to cheat.”—BUTLER.

MAN may be fairly styled an animal of the class “gullible.” From the hour of his birth till the day of his death, never does the organ of credulity cease to bump out his cerebrum. It is a common saying among the legs of the turf, that “there is a flat born every minute.” No dictum can be based on better grounds. Man appears to glory in being swindled, upon the same principle that leads Shakespeare’s citizen to boast of “having had losses.” Man is “done brown” daily; but never gets wholly baked, in the scorching oven of experience. The bumpkin yet gapes at Doncaster for the “little pea” beneath the thimble, with the same intense degree of viridity that poor Paddy drops his tinpenny into the big beggarman’s hat, in the full belief his copper will return to him hereafter in the form of gold.

As was man in the beginning, touching his largeness of swallow, so is he now, and so will he ever be. This quality is part and parcel of his essence; and experience here availeth him not. Almost within our own recollection, did

the bottle conjuror draw his hundreds, and the Cock Lane ghost her thousands. Each Scaramuccia fills the benches; whether it be Johanna and her cradle; or Chabot, with his beefsteak stewed in Prussic acid. The mob who have seen the show come away content, lest they be taken for dupes. Robert Macaire bows them forth; and Bertrand, beating the big drum, safely appeals to the verdict of the outgoers, as he calls on the multitude to tread in their path.

These sage reflections, and many more, equally pithy, suggested themselves irresistibly to our mind, while dusting the books in our humble library one sunny morning last week. During this interesting process, a thick tome fell on our head, quite "promiscuously;" and taking it up, on the principle of trying the "*sortes Virgilianæ*," we found it to consist of some half-dozen, or more, learned and voluminous tracts, on the subject of the automaton chess-player.

THE AUTOMATON CHESS-PLAYER! Lofty title! magniloquent cognomen! A composition of brass or wood, of ivory or of iron, called forth from the forest or the mine, to do duty, at *no* notice, for a Philidor, a La Bourdonnais, or a M'Donnell; and going sententiously through the process of reasoning and calculation—inviting throughout Europe, all comers to break a spear in the tented field, and dealing forth checkmate so liberally from the unaided resources of its own precious block-head—marshalling its forces on the plain, and conducting them faithfully hither and thither, literally *without seeing the board*—courting the combat with our stoutest paladins, for some sixty or seventy years—and foiling every attempt to discover the whereabouts of the Promethean spark



within—upsetting kings and kaisars, knights and castles, honest men and rooks, mitres and Amazons, as the boy knocks down his tiny ninepins—redressing the wrongs of injured queens, and seating them once more on their thrones of ivory or of ebon—conquering Napoleon Bonaparte and Frederick of Prussia in the mimic field of war, and forcing Eugene Beauharnois to cry “ransom”—lording it, in the strong spell of knowledge, over court and cottage, yet every where carrying off the laurel. Seriously do we pronounce the career of the Automaton to have been more gloriously brilliant, and certainly less bloodstained, than that of the greatest warrior who ever founded a kingdom or a dynasty.

The Chess-playing Automaton has never yet received, here, the meed of notoriety so long since fairly won. The British know him chiefly by name, though he has visited their shores, and dived his hand into their pockets. Be it ours, on the present occasion, to elucidate the subject, and place the great Turk on that niche in the temple of Fame, so justly due to his achievements. Alexander the Great had his Quintus Curtius. The Automaton, like Henri Quatre, must have his Sully.

We shall deal, however, with King Log, as beseemeth the scribe living among a free people. Great names may not hoodwink our eyes; and if we ever meet with an ass in the lion's skin, we shall make bold to cudgel him out. We can distinguish between real merit and merely ingenious pretension; while we claim a right on all occasions to call things by their proper names—a cat being to us a cat. For three-quarters of a century, the Automaton Chessman has been inscribed on a page of the history of earth, as of a construction and constitution absurdly miraculous;

for when before did metal think, or timber calculate? We shall now examine whether the Automaton is best entitled to be typified as Jupiter Tonans or Jupiter Scapin, as Murat or Mantalini.

Let us here deposit, logically, a rough definition of what properly constitutes an automaton.

An automaton is a machine made by human hands, capable of performing sundry movements, gestures, or actions, of itself, upon the setting in motion of certain springs, or forms of power. As long as these means to the end desired are kept up and maintained, so long will the automaton perform; continuing its operations during the whole time the moving principle remains in a healthy state. Such is an automaton in its most simple shape of existence.

The flying dove of Archytas, mentioned by Aulus Gellius (*Noct. At.*, lib. x. c. 12); as also the wooden eagle of Regiomontanus, which flew from the city to meet the emperor, and, having saluted him, returned back again, if they ever existed at all, may be fairly styled automata; as was the iron fly, which, at a banquet, flew out of its master's hands, and, first taking a round of the hall, again settled at the starting point (*Apol.*, c. x. sect. 1). The trumpeter of Maelzel, the flute-player of Vaucanson, the Apollonicon of Flight and Robson, the wooden lady playing the pianoforte (her family is tolerably numerous!), and a hundred other similarly curious engines of the same class of automata, are doubtless familiar to the recollections of our readers.

A second class of automata, like the first, may be worked by machinery, chiefly self-acting, upon a fixed principle; possessing, however, at the same time, a communication,

not immediately apparent, with human agency ; and hence, changing the regular order and succession of their movements, according to existing circumstances. There is no third class of automata ; since that form of automaton depending exclusively on human aid, however disguised, is but a spurious scion of the tree.

Can the Chess-player be ranked among either one of the legitimate species of automata ? The crowd, who look only on the surface, have for seventy years answered this question in the affirmative, and placed Mr. Block in our second class of automata ; but have they done so correctly ? *Nous verrons.* Were we to order a watch of Monsieur Leroy, which, at the word of command, would point its hands to whatsoever part of the dial we directed, the skilful French horologer would reply, that nothing but a living human hand could so shape its power of movement. Are not the two cases strictly on a par ? Which, then, is the correct respondent, Monsieur Leroy or the beast called Legion ? We love a correct definition. The Automaton Chess-player was either a gross piece of humbug, or it was a sentient being, endowed, like man himself, with volition, judgment, and all the rest of it ; but in neither case was it an automaton. Most true is it, that whenever Legion cannot readily solve any given problem, he prefers either adopting the cry of "miracle," or gulping down any solution offered, to seeking for himself the key to the mystery, through the medium of patient and laboured investigation.

But we may not further lengthen out our prologue to the farce ; so pass we on at once to a glance at the original creation, life, and adventures, of our timber Frankenstein.

The Chess Automaton was the sole invention of Wolfgang de Kempelen, a Hungarian gentleman, Aulic coun-

sellor to the royal chamber of the domains of the emperor in Hungary, and celebrated for great genius in every department of mechanics. From a boy, he had trod in the path of science, and was incontestably of first-rate capabilities as a mechanician and engineer. Invention was his hobby, and he rode it furiously, even to the partial impoverishment of his means. M. de Kempelen, being at Vienna in the year 1769, was invited by the Empress Maria Theresa to be present at the representation of certain magnetic games, or experiments, about to be shewn in public at the imperial court by M. Pelletier, a Frenchman. During the exhibition, De Kempelen, being honoured by a long conversation with his sovereign, was induced casually to mention that he thought he could construct a machine, the powers of which should be far more surprising, and the deception more complete, than all the wonders of magnetism just displayed by Pelletier. At this declaration, the curiosity of the empress was naturally excited; and, with true female eagerness for novelty, she drew from De Kempelen a promise to gratify her wishes, by preparing an early and practical proof of his bold assertion. The artist returned to his modest dwelling at Presburgh, and girded up his loins to the task. He kept his word with his imperial mistress; and in the following year presented himself once more at the court of Vienna, accompanied by the Automaton Chess-player. Need we say that its success was triumphantly complete?

The machine being set in motion, excited the admiration of the Empress Maria Theresa, as well as of the most illustrious and scientific individuals in her circle; all of whom were freely permitted to test its extraordinary powers. The fame of the figure spread over the face of

Europe, whose newspapers and journals rang with the advent of the newly born prodigy; the performances of which were duly exaggerated, *selon les regles*, in the detail. Dr. Kempelen, a modest and quiet man, was far from smiling at the celebrity hereby acquired. He would have been glad to achieve greatness, but cared little for it when thus thrust upon him. He was held up as a wizard, a Maugraby, a Michael Scott, *première qualité*; and was almost disgusted at the success of his contrivance. In fact, De Kempelen never hesitated to speak his mind plainly as to the real merits of his engine. "It is," said he to his friends, "a trifle, not without merit as to its mechanism; but those effects, which to the spectators appear so wonderful, arise merely from the boldness of the original conception, and the fortunate choice of the means employed by me to carry out the illusion." This is the language of a great mind, not choosing prematurely to open the eyes of surrounding dupes, but scorning to take to himself greater reputation than he felt was his due: and these words alone ought to have satisfied men of *nous*, that the thing was merely a clever hoax; since, had it been in reality that which it appeared to be outwardly, viz. a machine, which by itself, and of itself alone, could conduct a game of chess, then, indeed, instead of its being a "trifle," as denominated by De Kempelen, it might proudly have reared its head, as an emanation from a mind which had discovered some hitherto unheard-of means wherewith to conquer matter.

It will be interesting here to describe the "outward man" of the Automaton, as he first appeared, while yet exhibited only in the private circle of its inventor; and we accordingly extract from the work of M. Windisch, one of the earliest believers in De Kempelen's gnome, and

one of those who was honoured by seeing the babe, as may be said, in the cradle. (*Briefe über den Schachspieler des Herrn von Kempelen*, &c. Basle, 1783. 8vo.)

"The first idea which occurs on an examination of the Automaton Chess player," says M. de Windisch, "is a suspicion that its movements are under the immediate guidance of some human being. From this error I was not myself exempt, when I saw, for the first time, the inventor draw from a recess his Automaton, fixed to a good-sized chest; and I could not, any more than others, help suspecting that this chest certainly contained a child, which, as I guessed from the dimensions of the case, might be ten or twelve years of age. Many of the visitors were equally convinced of such being the fact, and did not hesitate already to declare their opinions aloud. But we were all equally confounded on seeing M. de Kempelen turn up the garments of the Automaton, pull forth the drawer, and open all the doors of the chest. Moving it about, thus opened, by means of the castors on which it is placed, he turned it in all directions, and permitted us freely to examine it all over. I was not backward in this scrutiny. I searched into its darkest corners; and finding no possibility of its concealing any object of even the size of my hat, my self-love was terribly mortified at seeing my ingenious conjecture put totally to flight. All the spectators underwent a similar impression; and on their countenances were visibly depicted signs of extreme surprise. One old lady, above the rest, recollecting, doubtless, the fairy tales of her youth, first crossing herself, with a heavy and devout sigh, went and hid herself in a distant window, that she might no longer remain in a proximity so dangerous as that existing between herself and the demon she now fully believed must occupy the Automaton. I have since viewed the machine frequently, have examined it in every way I could think of, and have played chess against it, and am still reduced to the humiliating avowal that I know nothing about it. Still I am consoled by the reflection that many other persons, though gifted with more profound knowledge and skill in mechanics, have not succeeded better than myself. Out of many thousand persons, of all classes, who have seen it, not one has discovered the secret. The Gordian knot presented to Alexander must

have been less difficult to unravel. Is it an illusion? So be it. But it is, then, an illusion which does honour to the human mind; an illusion more surprising, more inconceivable, than all those which are to be found in the different collections of mathematical recreations.

"The Automaton receives its visitors in M. de Kempelen's study; in the antechamber of which nothing is to be seen but the tools of a joiner or locksmith, thrown about in most admired confusion. No communication can possibly exist between the Automaton and any adjoining room; as was proved by the figure's being carried for exhibition to the imperial palace. It runs on castors; and can, therefore, have nothing about it dependant on the construction of the floor. These are important premises.

"The first object which strikes the view, on entering the study, is the Automaton, which is placed opposite the door. The chest to which it is affixed is three feet and a half long, two feet wide, and two feet and a half high; and is, by means of the aforesaid castors, moved with facility from place to place. Behind this chest is seen a figure the size of life, dressed in the Turkish costume, seated upon a wooden chair fastened to the body of the Automaton, and which of course moves with it, when rolled about the apartment. The figure leans its right arm on the table, holding a long Turkish pipe in his left hand, in the attitude of a person who ceases to smoke. It plays with its left hand; which M. de Kempelen informed me was an oversight on his part, not discovered until the work was so far advanced, that to amend the Turk's manners would have required nearly total reconstruction. When the Turk is about to play, M. de Kempelen, as pipe-bearer, takes the pipe from his hand. Before the Automaton is a chess-board, screwed to the table, or upper surface of the chest, on which the eyes of the figure appear to be constantly fixed.

"M. de Kempelen opens the front doors of the chest, and pulls out the drawer which is underneath. The chest is partitioned off into two equal parts, of which the left is narrower than the right. The left side, indeed, occupies scarcely one-third part of the length of the chest, and is filled with wheels, levers, cylinders, and other pieces of clockwork. In the division to the right are seen some wheels, some spring barrels, and a couple of horizontal quadrants. The remainder is filled with a casket, a cushion, and a small board,

on which are traced certain letters in gold. At a subsequent point of time, and prior to the Automaton's commencing play, the inventor takes out this casket, and places it on a side table. He does the same by the board with letters ; which is finally placed on the chess-board after the game is placed, to enable the Automaton by these means to answer questions to be put to him.

"In the drawer of the chest above-mentioned are found chess-men, of red and white ivory, on a board, with which they are taken out to be placed on the side of the chess-board. There is likewise a small box, rather long in its form, containing six pigmy chess-boards, each of which presents an ending of a game. Such situations are set up in detail on the Automaton's own board ; and he undertakes to win each and every such game by force, whether he play with the white or red pieces.

"I had forgotten also to observe, that M. de Kempelen not only opens the front door of the chest, but also those behind ; by which means all the wheels are clearly seen, so as to give the most perfect conviction that no living being could be hidden therein. To render this *exposé* even more complete, the constructor usually places a lighted taper in the interior of the chest ; thus throwing light into its remotest corners.

"Finally, he lifts up the robe of the Automaton, and throws it over his head, in such a manner as completely to shew the structure of the interior, where are also seen only wheels and levers ; which so entirely occupy the body of the Automaton, that room is not left to hide even a cat. The very trousers of the Turk are furnished with a small door, likewise flung open, to remove the remotest shadow of a doubt.

"But do not imagine, good reader, that the inventor shuts one door as he opens another. *The entire Automaton is seen at the same time uncovered ; the garments being also turned up, and the drawer opened,* as well as all the drawers of the chest. In fact, it is in this state he rolls it from place to place, around the room, courting the inspection of the curious."

We may here state that Maelzel, the last proprietor of the Automaton, adopted a very similar description of



routine in the way he shewed the figure; and was equally successful in making the spectators believe, like Windisch, *that they saw the whole of the interior at once*. Maelzel varied some of the details, doing away with its brazen-head-like capacity of answering questions, under a just impression that this part of its black art approximated a little too closely to the feats of the learned pig, Toby. But the Automaton is all this time uncovered; and we resume Windisch's narrative, quickly, to prevent the poor thing from taking cold.

"After having allowed time for sufficient investigation of its anatomy," proceeds our eye-witness, "M. de Kempelen shuts all the doors of the chest, and places it behind a balustrade, made for the purpose of preventing the spectators from shaking the machine, by touching or leaning upon it when the Automaton plays; and also to keep clear for the inventor a rather spacious place, in which he occasionally walks, approaching the chest at times, on the right or left side, but without touching it, until it is time to wind up the springs. Finally, he passes his hand into the interior of the Automaton, to arrange the movements in their suitable order; and finishes all, by placing a cushion under the playing arm of the Turk.

"It must be stated, with regard to the casket, that M. de Kempelen places it on a little table near the machine, without, however, there being any apparent communication between the Automaton, and the table, or the casket; to which the inventor has frequent recourse during the playing of the game by the Automaton; for he opens it from time to time, to look at the inside, which is kept hidden from the spectators.

"It is generally assumed that this casket is simply a device to attract attention; still M. de Kempelen assures his visitors that without it the Automaton could not play. The letters traced in gold on the board, to which allusion has already been made, serve as a new recreation when chess is closed. It is then placed on the chess-board; and the Automaton answers the questions of the audience, by pointing with his finger successively to the letters necessary to convey

a reply. To prepare for this latter recreation, the fabricator arranges certain movements in the interior of the machine."

Again we must interrupt the Herrn von Windisch, to note particularly the care of De Kempelen lest his figure should be too rudely jostled by the audience. The grave assertion of our Austrian Archimedes, that the secret lay within the casket, must have been difficult for him to bring out without laughing. Windisch resumes :—

"The Automaton, when about to move at chess, slowly raises his arm, and directs it towards the piece he intends to play. He suspends his hand over the piece, spreads his fingers to grasp it, places it in its destined situation, draws back his arm, and again rests it on the cushion. If he have occasion to capture a man, the same process is used. At each move he makes, a slow sound of wheels and clock-work is heard. This noise ceases when the move is made. The Automaton always claims the first move. When his adversary plays, the figure lifts his head and overlooks the board. He courteously warns the queen of being attacked, by bowing his head twice; and equally notifies check to the king by three bows. Should a false move be played, he indignantly shakes his head; but not confining himself to tacit disapprobation, instantly confiscates the offending piece, following up his capture by playing himself; and thus depriving his opponent not only of his piece, but of his move also. This *divertissement* happens not unfrequently; spectators wishing to test the figure's powers of discrimination. The advantage hereby gained contributes to the Turk's chance of winning; but the law being known beforehand, is equally fair for both parties: though the Automaton never commits an illegality.

"M. de Kempelen requests those chess-players who confront his warrior to place the chess-men strictly in the centre of the squares; this precaution being necessary, in order that the Automaton, in grasping a piece, may not be exposed to damaging its fingers, by coming imperfectly in collision therewith. The rules of the game are rigidly observed.

"The machine can play but ten or twelve moves without being

wound up, but it is clear such winding up can produce no other effect than to maintain its moving power, without having any connexion with its directing power, or rather with its faculty of acting as required by circumstances. In such faculty, doubtless consists the chief merit of the engine, and here lies the mystery. During the time of play M. de Kempelen never touches it, except for the purposes aforesaid of winding up, once in ten or a dozen moves.

"Mathematicians and mechanists of all countries have examined the Automaton with the most scrupulous attention, without being able to discover any trace of the secret. I have frequently seen the Automaton playing, surrounded by twenty or thirty persons, who kept their eyes incessantly fixed on the inventor. We have invariably observed him keeping at a distance of three or four paces from the figure, doing nothing, but occasionally looking in the casket before-mentioned, and never betraying himself by any movement which might indicate that he was even remotely in communication with the Automaton. To destroy the impression that magnetism is the principal of action, M. de Kempelen permits the most powerful magnet to be placed on the machine.

"The moving the Knight successively over the sixty-four squares of the board, in as many leaps, is also a feat too remarkable to be passed over. As soon as the chess-men are taken off, one of the bystanders places a knight on any square of the board he chooses. The Automaton lifts up the knight, and beginning at the square on which he stands, causes it to cover the sixty-four squares in the same number of moves, without missing one, and without touching one square twice over. The spectator marks the squares in the progress of this difficult calculation, by placing a counter on each square to which the knight is played. No matter what square you first seat the knight upon, he never misses the performance of his task."

The above description of the Chess Automaton, as he first appeared, is as minute as can be desired: he played chess, and played it well. The data were fairly established, that it was impossible the figure could be in communication with either one of the adjoining rooms, the ceiling, or the floor; and the interior of the machine being apparently so

thoroughly exposed to view, removed all idea of a human person being concealed therein. Indeed, in the words of Windisch, we find that it was agreed by the spectators there was not space even for the temporary lodging of "a cat." De Kempelen's gravely walking about the room with his casket, reminds one of Friar Bacon with his learned head, or Merlin and his wand. After a few moves are played, he kindly treats the Automaton to the refreshment of winding up, to recruit its fainting energies, as one would hand a man a glass of sherry. De Kempelen frequently turned his back, moreover, on his progeny during three or four moves, conversing meanwhile with the spectators. The feat of moving the knight over the sixty-four squares in as many moves, is, it must be admitted, not quite so prodigious as represented by Windisch. There are many printed plans for performing this; and it is obvious that any one of these would do for De Kempelen's purpose, provided it be a re-entering series of moves; that is to say, the knight, when he leaps to the sixty-fourth square, must be just a knight's move from the square on which he originally started. We do not speak here of the difficulty of causing the machine to perform this, but would merely remind the reader that any person, when he has once acquired by heart the knight's move over the board, in a re-entering series, has but to apply the same chain of moves in every case, whatsoever square of the board the knight may choose to make the first link of that circular chain.

There could be hardly more than four forms of hypothesis broached by the spectators of the Automaton; and by this time we find they were all equally admitted to be fallacious. A concealed man or boy,—confederacy with a

person in another chamber,—dependency on the floor or ceiling—magnetism or electricity; doubtless each of these theories had its votaries, and each of them was analysed in vain. But much time was not given in this stage of the performance to the exercise of the thinking faculty on the part of Germany.

Torn to pieces by the crowd, who eagerly rushed to view the phenomenon, De Kempelen found it was easier to raise a spirit than to lay him again. Pestered with letters demanding explanation, from all the *savans* of Europe; annoyed at the absurdities dealt forth anent the matter by the public press; and called upon, morning, noon, and night, to set up “his motion” for the gratification of some man with a handle or a tail to his name,—poor M. de Kempelen began to find out that fame, however glittering, has its drawbacks. Many years of time, and the greater part of his fortune, had he lavished in improving the science of hydraulics. These efforts were before the public; but, although deservedly of merit, his improved fire-engines and water-pumps were altogether pushed into the shade, in favour of his Automaton Chess-player! So situated, it is highly creditable to his memory that he refused the offer of large sums of money from several persons who wished to purchase the Automaton by way of speculation. For a long time, his nice sense of honour prevented him from stooping to coin cash, from metal so intrinsically base, as he felt the ore in question really to be. De Kempelen declined suffering the Automaton to be made a public exhibition; and, as the only means in his power of getting rid of the burden he had placed on his shoulders, actually took the figure partially to pieces, stowed it away, and gave out that it had been damaged by the frequent re-

movals it had undergone from place to place. M. de Kempelen was again a free man, and once more devoted himself arduously to his really scientific discoveries in mechanics. His fame as a magician died away, and his friends shook him by the hand without fearing to be brimstone-marked in the contact.

Fallen from his throne ; bruised and battered, limbless, and motionless, lay the turbaned *soldan*, during an interval of many years ; smothered with dust, buried in darkness, and forgotten in its fall from greatness, by the shouting sycophants who had so loudly hailed the rising star. But its *avatur* was to come ; and it was written in the book of fate, that, like a true Turkish sovereign, it should yet be dragged from the prison in which it pined, to march once more to the triumph of the battle-field, and the throne of talent over gullibility.

The Grand Duke Paul, of Russia, came with his consort under the travelling style and titles of the Count and Countess du Nord, to visit the Emperor Joseph II., at the court of Vienna. Every device which human talent could suggest was resorted to, in order to give due entertainment to guests so illustrious ; and, after a certain period, when the first eatings, drinkings, and dancings, were over, Joseph bethought him of De Kempelen and the Automaton. The royal wishes were conveyed to our philosopher, that he would oblige his sovereign by exhibiting his chess-playing figure once again, and De Kempelen cheerfully complied with the request. To the half-bred savages of the north, composing the suite of the royal visitors, the exhibition could not fail to be striking ; and the Emperor Joseph, doubtless, slept that night to the tune of "How we shall astonish the Browns !"

De Kempelen employed himself with so much zeal and activity in the furbishing up of his invention, that in five weeks' time the Automaton chess hero once more made his bow at court with entirely new "dresses, properties, and decorations." As before, its success was complete; the grand duke and his spouse, as well as the Emperor Joseph, were equally delighted and astonished by its feats. De Kempelen was handsomely rewarded, and the whole court joined in an earnest recommendation to him, for the sake of his family, no longer to resist the making an exhibition of his Automaton a matter of personal emolument. Grown worldly wise from experience, De Kempelen now considered that he should do wrong, longer to neglect this opportunity of restoring his broken fortunes. He felt, too, more assured of the merit of his secret, and determined to suffer no false delicacy for the future to prevent his reaping the harvest of his ingenious mystification. The emperor granted him a two years' leave of absence from the duties of his office, during which time his salary was equally to go on; and the Aulic counsellor prepared to travel through Germany, France, and England, in company with the wonderful figure whose fame had already diffused itself throughout civilized Europe.

It was in the year 1783 that De Kempelen and the Automaton first came to Paris. They were received with a hearty welcome, and the plaudits of *la grande nation* knew no bounds. The Automaton, however, as a player, was beaten by the great professors at the Café de la Régence, then the resort of the *élite*. But whether one's nerves are strung on wood or bone, one need not be ashamed at being vanquished by first-raters; and the merit of the figure, of course, did not depend upon its in-

variably winning. It is worthy of observation, that De Kempelen himself was very inferior to his Automaton as a chess-man; since in playing in the ordinary manner, a first-rate practitioner could give him the rook; but there was much less difference between the best flesh-and-blood players and their wooden opponent. The first French artists were foiled in their attempts to dive into the mystery, and many and elaborate were the theories set up on the occasion, all of which broke down as before, on being put to the test. De Kempelen found his speculation a capital hit; and, leaving Paris for a time, crossed Dover Straits with the Automaton, to levy contributions on the pockets of John Bull.

Chess was at that period exclusively played in England by the aristocracy, and among that class was extremely fashionable, owing to Philidor (honour to his mighty shade!) This renowned player spent the greater part of his time in London, and thus gave an impetus to the cultivation of the game. Whether he personally played with the Automaton, we know not, and it matters little; he had formed a school of chess here, of greater extent than was ever seen before or after. To this cause may be attributed the high fee of admission to a sight of our Automaton, fixed by M. de K. at five shillings! Hundreds and thousands of persons flocked to the show; and the silver crowns rained down on the ingenious inventor, till he was almost knee-deep in the argent stream. An improvement had been made, too, in the really mechanical part of his figure, which now pronounced from its mouth something intended for *échec*, in giving check to the king.

But England contains a good deal of blood rather sceptical in these latter times as to the possibility of miracles,



and there was not wanting a man now to stand up in the cause of common sense. Mr. Philip Thicknesse printed a pamphlet in 1785, in which he denounces the chess-playing Automaton as a piece of imposture, in no measured terms. Partly hitting the secret, he assumes that a child is confined in the chest, from ten to fourteen years of age, who plays the game; but adds, absurdly enough, that Master Johnny sees the state of the board reflected from a looking glass in the ceiling. In fact, Mr. Thicknesse appears to have been one of those true old English grumblers who find fault with every thing, and therefore are certain now and then to be in the right, *by chance*. He had previously discovered a somewhat analogous case of curious imposture worth quoting, as tending to shew what had put him on the scent:—

“Forty years since,” writes Thicknesse, “I found three hundred people assembled to see, at a shilling each, a coach go without horses moved by a man withinside of a wheel, ten feet in diameter, just as the crane-wheel raises goods from ships on a quay. Mr. Quin, the Duke of Athol, and many persons present, were angry with me for saying it was trod round by a man within the hoop, or hinder wheel; but a small paper of snuff put into the wheel, soon convinced all around that it could not only move, but sneeze too, like a Christian.”

We wonder how De Kempelen would have met a proposition to throw an ounce or two of snuff upon speculation among his springs and levers?

Mr. Thicknesse proceeds to assume that the concealed child may be equally enabled to look over the board, through “Monsieur Automaton’s robes and hair-trimmings.” A similar idea was broached, with equal ingenious fallacy, in our own time. The high price of admission is especially complained of by Thicknesse. He writes,—

"I was one of the many who have paid fifteen shillings to shew my family the figure of a Turk, which has a moveable arm, a thumb, and two clumsy fingers; which, by pulling a string within the arm, can embrace or leave a chess-man just where a living hand directs it. Let the exhibitor, therefore, call it a good deception, and I will subscribe to the truth of it; but while he draws a large sum of money from us under the assurance of its being an automaton that moves by mechanical powers, he endeavours to deceive; and it is a fair game to expose it, that the price, at least, may be reduced; for I confess it is a curiosity, and I believe as much money would be received at one shilling each, as is now gained by demanding five.

"I saw," continues he, "the ermine trimmings of the Turk's outer garment move once or twice, when the figure should have been quite motionless, and that a confederate is concealed is past all doubt; for they only exhibit the Automaton from 1 to 2 o'clock, because the invisible player could not bear a longer confinement; for if he could, it cannot be supposed that they would refuse to receive crowns for admittance from 12 o'clock to 4, instead of only from 1 to 2. Indeed M. de Kempelen had the candour to say to a certain nobleman in Paris who asked him to disclose the solution of the problem, 'Quand vous le saurez, mon prince, ce ne sera plus rien.'"

If not altogether correct, it is certain that Mr. Thicknesse was very like "*burning*," in the approach he made towards finding the hidden treasure; but the *soi-disant* exposure being mere declamation, unaccompanied by any thing like architectural drawings or detailed proofs, fell quietly to the ground, and withered not the laurel on which it dared to breathe.

But the period was now at hand when the poor Automaton was destined a second time to afford fresh proofs of the ingratitude and inconstancy of man. He was to be deserted by his brilliant train of admirers, and go once more, for a space, into outer darkness. Returning from France and England to Germany, De Kempelen carried

his Saracenic toy, by special invitation, to the court of Frederick (called "the Great"), at Berlin. This prince was an enthusiastic admirer of Chess, and carried his devotion to Caissa so far as even to play a game, by correspondence, with Voltaire, sending a royal courier to and fro, between Paris and Berlin, with the moves. The Automaton beat Frederick and his whole court, which he might easily do, as the prince was only what is termed in the London Chess Club, a "rook player." Eager to solve the riddle, Frederick adopted the truly royal means of purchasing it. For a large sum, the Automaton Chess-player became his majesty's subject, slave, and serf, with all its rights and appendages. The cash being paid down, De Kempelen, in a *tête-à-tête* with the King, divulged the whole of his magic art. Frederick's pride was mortified by the disclosure, though he never revealed the secret; nor did he send his purchase to rot, like a living offender, in the dungeons of Spandau. He was hurt, however, at having been, as he fancied, duped. The spell was dissolved; the charm broken. The Automaton, shorn of its beams, and denounced by offended majesty as a swindling imposture, was carelessly thrown aside into an obscure lumber-room; where, for the next thirty years, it lay in profound repose, like the sleeping beauty in the fairy tale, awaiting the visit of the prince destined alone to dissolve its long inglorious slumber.

That prince came, and that prince was Napoleon; sent by fate to stir up many other slumberers nodding on their thrones, as well as our mighty wooden Tamerlane. Napoleon came to Berlin, and the Chess Automaton was again himself. Freshly armed and caparisoned, did he gaily sally forth once more to victory. He had been for-

gotten, and was therefore received like a fresh creation. Accompanied, during the next few years of his life, by a demonstrator formed in the school of De Kempelen—then dead—the Automaton once more journeyed by land and by sea, in search of fresh victims. As of old, he was every where successful ; and the veil of necromancy which covered his movements, remained still equally impenetrable to the lights of philosophy and science.

Napoleon, himself a chess-player, honoured the Automaton by playing a game in person against it. The contest was marked by an interesting circumstance. Half-a-dozen moves had barely been played, when Buonaparte, purposely to test the powers of the machine, committed a false move ; the Automaton bowed, replaced the offending piece, and motioned to Napoleon that he should move correctly. Highly amused, after a few minutes the French chief again played an illegal move. This time, the Automaton, without hesitation, snatched off the piece which had moved falsely, confiscated it, and made his own move. Buonaparte laughed ; and, for the third time, as if to put the patience of his antagonist to a severe trial, played a false move. The Automaton raised his arm, swept the whole of the pieces off the board, and declined continuing the game !

We must here pass rapidly over a rather long interval of time, at the end of which we find the Automaton Chess-player at the court of Eugene Beauharnois, then King of Bavaria. Preceded by its colossal reputation, our figure (the property then of M. Maelzel, the celebrated fabricator of the musical metronome, and other works of art) fully sustained his well-won fame. Eugene was fond of chess, and money was of little object. He could not resist the

temptation of acquiring the secret which had set the wits of the world at defiance for so many years ; and, for the second time, was the Automaton Chess-player sold, like a slave, for a price. Thirty thousand francs were asked by the proprietor, and this sum was unhesitatingly paid by Prince Eugene for the machine and its key.

And now the moment has arrived when the treasured mystery of De Kempelen is again to be opened at the golden bidding of royalty. The veil is about to be raised, and the curiosity of the King to be gratified. The courtiers are dismissed the room, the door locked by Eugene, and every precaution taken to ensure his acquiring the sole knowledge of the hidden enigma. The prince is alone with the demonstrator ; the latter, unhesitatingly and in silence, flings open simultaneously all the doors of the chest ; and Prince Eugene saw—what he saw !

Mr. Blue Beard, at the door of the azure chamber, looked not more blue than did Bavaria's monarch ; but Eugene faced the *dénoûement* with greater wisdom than had done the former royal purchaser of the secret. He shrugged up his shoulders, took a pinch of snuff, laughed at the joke, and, though he probably thought his purchase *rather dear at the price*, expressed much gratification at inspecting the figure in all its parts. He even subsequently placed himself in the necessary relation with the Automaton, and giving it the invisible impulse, conducted it during several games against some of his most intimate friends.

But, the novelty over, what was the use of our hero's newly-made purchase ? Napoleon's followers had little time granted them for rest, and Prince Eugene felt the Automaton likely to become a dead, as well as a dumb, weight on his hands. True, he could amuse himself with

it, by suffering it to march in his suite; but it appeared a good player, a real living man, was a necessary accompaniment to produce the desired degree of *éclat*. The demonstrator, who received the audience, was not sufficient, and could do no good single-handed; a player must therefore be engaged and attached to the court to conduct it properly, and the fox would be unearthed from his hole in a fortnight. The prince found himself in a most unkindly description of dilemma. He had got the lamp, but found he must also retain the genius of the lamp, or else throw away his toy, like a child when it has broken the works of its threepenny watch to see what made it tick. Prince Eugene was still wavering as to the course to be adopted, when the sagacious M. Maelzel, who had already experienced some regret at parting with his *protégé*, requested the favour to be again reinstated in the charge, promising to pay Eugene the interest of the thirty thousand francs Mr. M. had pocketed. This proposition was graciously conceded by the gallant Beauharnois, and Maelzel thus had the satisfaction of finding he had made a tolerably good bargain, getting literally the money for nothing at all!

Leaving Bavaria with the Automaton, Maelzel was once more *en route*, as travelling showman of the wooden genius. Other automata were adopted into the family, and a handsome income was realized by their ingenious proprietor. Himself an inferior player, he called the assistance of first-rate talent to the field as his ally. Our limits compel us to skip over some interval of time here, during which M. Boncourt (we believe) was Maelzel's *chef* in Paris, where the machine was received with all its former favour; and we take up the subject in 1819, when Maelzel again appeared with the Chess Automaton in London.

Here the exhibition drew crowds of visitors, and excited universal admiration. The press teemed with compliments to the wooden player; and its success, as a curiosity, was considerably enhanced by the circumstance of its almost universally coming off victorious. Maelzel well knew that the effect produced by the exhibition would be incalculably greater in proportion to the skill displayed by the figure. He engaged the powerful assistance of a first-rate English player (Mr. Lewis), who conducted the Automaton for something like a twelvemonth; at the end of which time he was relieved from his laborious duty by the celebrated Mouret, one of the first players in France.

Mouret was a chess-player of the Deschappelles' school, and stood deservedly high on the list of great players. His game was, perhaps, less brilliant than sound and sure. To make the play of the Automaton still more striking, it was now resolved that it should give the odds of pawn and move to all comers. Under the inspiration of Mouret, it accomplished this, hardly losing one game in a hundred. Fifty of the games played during the Siamese-twin-like connection of Mouret and the Automaton (body and board), were taken down, in 1820, by Mr. Hunneman, and published in a small volume. These games contain a fair specimen of Mouret's great skill, and embody some beautiful emanations of genius. Throughout the whole, he gives the pawn and move, numbering among his opponents Messrs. Brand, Cochrane, Keen, and Mercier,—some of the first chess-players of the time. Mouret, be it stated, *en passant*, had the honour of being chess-teacher to the family of Louis Philippe, king of the French. Every encouragement was given by the chess circle to Mouret's talent; but he unhappily formed habits of dissipation fatal

to his respectability and standing in society. He burnt out his brain with brandy, and died recently in Paris, reduced to the extremest stage of misery and degradation.

While the Automaton made this, his farewell visit to London, several published essays appeared on the subject. One of these, by an Oxford graduate (*Observations on the Automaton Chess-Player*, 8vo., 1819), gives a full description of the figure, and its mode of playing; which was but slightly varied, and that in unimportant points, from what the Automaton appeared as originally fabricated by Kempelen. Its present proprietor had thrown the casket overboard; but gave equal facilities of inspection to the assembled crowd. He held a lighted candle in the interior before playing, to shew up even its remotest corners, and then left the candle burning on an adjoining slab. The Oxford graduate owns, that, with all his research, he could not solve the enigma; and dismisses it with a parcel of "probablys," leading to no conclusion whatever.

In that wherein Oxford failed, Cambridge was more successful. Mr Robert Willis, of the University of Cambridge, gave the British public, in 1821, an interesting work on the subject, in which he builds up a hypothesis, partly, but not wholly, based on truth, as will be presently seen (*An Attempt to Analyze the Automaton Chess-Player*. 8vo. London, 1821). Mr. Willis fairly proves, by figures and drawings, that a man may be concealed in the chest, able to overlook the board through the stuff waistcoat of the figure; having shifted his position in his lonely little cell several times, while the different parts of the apparatus were being exposed successively to view. This is something like the view of the subject originally taken by Thicknesse; but it is now beautifully and exactly made



out even to demonstration, by the aid of a skilful draughtsman and mechanist. Dr. Brewster, in his clever work on natural magic, has copied his account of the Automaton from the work of our Cantab; but neither he nor Willis appear sufficiently to have taken into consideration the almost utter impossibility of the concealed man's being impervious to detection, with merely a veil between him and the public. The least sound or motion would, in such case, destroy the illusion, and his very breathing would infallibly lead to ultimate exposure.

Throughout the preceding pages of this essay, although we have said, probably, sufficient to put our readers on the right track, as to finding their own way to the centre of the Cretan labyrinth of which we write; yet have we purposely deferred fully uncovering our Mokanna prematurely to the gaze of the multitude. We now proceed to give our own explanation of the whole affair, and in so doing shall turn the Automaton Chess-player inside out. Our early reading supplies our memory with a bit of *Sandford and Merton*, in which one of the boys is deservedly reprimanded for taking the bread out of the mouth of the juggler, at the country fair, through neutralizing a portion of his legerdemain by public exposure; and, for a somewhat similar reason, never should our good goosequill have dissected the Chess Automaton without fair and sufficient cause. Still this demands explanation. The two cases of the juggler and the Automaton, placed in juxtaposition, are by no means analogous. The conjuror at once honourably admits that he works by sleight of wrist,—by confederacy,—and also by previously combining certain laws of nature, and established causes of effect, to produce corresponding results unknown to the vulgar.

The Chess-Automaton, on the other hand, stood before its patrons with a lie in its mouth; dipping his timber fingers saucily into the pockets of the lieges, under most foul and false pretences. Had the gulled mob opened their wits as wide as they did eyes and mouth, they would probably have broken Mr. Automaton's head; and in so doing would have incurred as little reasonable or legal blame for assault and battery as they would do for ducking a convicted handkerchief-conveyancer. Other causes combine to give us absolution in the performance of our task. De Kempelen, Maelzel, and Mouret, are now all dead, and the Chess-Automaton will probably never revisit our shores. Mouret sold the secret of his prison-house to the French Penny Magazine; and M. De Tournay, a member of the Paris chess-club, has also published an abstract of the matter in the *Palamède*. No one scruple of delicacy can cause us longer to refrain from completely unmasking this clever piece of sheer impudent imposture.

*The man who really played the Chess-Automaton was concealed in the chest!* Such, in half-a-dozen words, is the sum and substance of the whole truth of the contrivance; but the manner in which his concealment was managed is as curious as ingenious. He sat upon a low species of stool, moving on castors, or wheels, and had every facility afforded him of changing and shifting his position, like an eel. While one part of the machine was shewn to the public, he took refuge in another; now lying down, now kneeling; placing his body in all sorts of positions, studied beforehand, and all assumed in regular rotation, like the A B C of a catechism. The interior pieces of clock-work—the wheels, and make-weight apparatus—were all equally moveable; and additional assistance was

thus yielded to the fraud. Even the trunk of the Automaton was used as a hiding-place, in its turn, for part of the player's body. A very short amount of practice, by way of rehearsal, was found sufficient to meet the purposes of the occasion ; and one regular order being observed by the two confederates as to the opening the machine, a mistake rarely or never occurred. Should any thing go radically wrong, the prisoner had the means of telegraphing his gaoler, and the performance could be suspended.

"But," says the reader, "what becomes of the vast apparatus of wheels, springs, levers, and caskets, which we ourselves saw ? Why did Maelzel require to wind up his man of wood and brass ?" The answer is short. These things were the dust thrown in the eyes of the public. The mind of the gaping spectator dwelt on the sound of springs and wheels, and was thus diverted from the main question. Mr. Willis, of Cambridge, with considerable sagacity, drew an inference from the winding up, by Maelzel, of the machine, rather different to that which was intended. Take his own words :—

"In all machinery requiring to be wound up, two consequences are inseparable from the construction. The first is, that in winding up the machinery, the key is limited in the number of its revolutions ; and the second is, that some relative proportion must be constantly maintained betwixt the winding up and the work performed, in order to enable the machine to continue its movements. Now these results are not observable in the Chess-player ; for the Automaton will sometimes execute sixty-three moves with only one winding up ; at other times, the exhibitor has been observed to repeat the winding-up after seven moves, and even three moves ; and once, probably from inadvertance, without the intervention of a single move ; whilst in every instance the key appeared to perform the same number of revolutions ; evincing, thereby, that the revolving axis was unconnected

with machinery ; except, perhaps, a ratchet wheel and click, or some similar apparatus, to enable it to produce the necessary sounds ; and, consequently, that the key, like that of a child's watch, might be turned whenever the purposes of the exhibition seemed to require it."

Had the deluded public reasoned on the matter earlier, in this close and shrewd manner, verily King Automaton would have been speedily deposed from his high places.

"But, again," objects a friend, "how could a man be concealed in the interior, when we saw all of that interior displayed at once ?" The same supposition was adopted by the original describer, Windisch ; and herein again lay the real merit of the inventor,—that he ingeniously caused the public thus to believe they saw the whole at once, when, in reality, they saw its different compartments but in detail. Certain doors dropped and closed of themselves, with spring locks ; others were opened in their places. The machine was turned round, but still was never wholly exposed to view at once. It becomes perfectly ludicrous to read over again Windisch's glowing description of the miraculous monster, when we find that even a reference to his own drawings shews that at the time he says all the doors were open, two were closed ; and, doubtless, many of our readers who saw the Automaton in Spring Gardens, or St. James's Street, will recollect that, after the pretended investigation, which so irresistibly reminds us of the Trojans probing the Greek wooden horse, all the doors were locked before the machine played. It is evident, that had the thing been, as pretended, a creation wholly of brass, and wood, and steel, the cause of the inventor would have been strengthened by allowing the whole of the interior to remain open while set in action ; for there would have been but little fear of a spectator carrying

away the plan, so as to form a second Dromio. The secret once known, how clear a meaning is thrown on the words of De Kempelen, as to its being a mere bagatelle, or trifle. It was, indeed, just that sort of clever hoax an artist of first-rate genius might form to please the mob of society; but no wonder he shrunk from the eulogiums lavishly bestowed upon his Caliban, when he found his jest was construed into earnest; and that men rushed, so very open-mouthed, to drain the cup of credulity.

Every adjunct that intellect could devise was skilfully superadded, to enhance the marvel. The machine was railed off, for a *now* tolerably clear reason; and a lighted candle having been first introduced into the body of the Automaton, to show the interior, *at a moment nothing could be seen*, was purposely left burning close at hand, in order to prevent any inopportune rays of light flashing from the interior, where a second candle was necessarily in process of ignition.

The director of the Automaton was quietly seated, then, in the interior. All public inspection over, and the doors being safely closed, he had only to make himself as comfortable as he could under existing circumstances. A wax candle supplied him with light, which the candle burning outside prevented being observed; and due measures were taken that he should not die for want of oxygen. Whether he was furnished with bread, meat, and wine, these deponents say not.

To direct the arm of the Automaton, the concealed confederate had but to set in motion a simple sort of spring, which caused its fingers to grasp the man he chose to play, and guide it to the performance of its task. To make the figure articulate check, nod its head, or perform other

fooleries, similar strings, or wires, required but a pull. It must be observed, that care was taken the performance should never last so long as to fatigue the player to exhaustion. We have before remarked, that the Automaton's chess-board and men were placed in public view before him. The concealed player possessed in the interior a second, and smaller, board, with the men pegged into it, as if for travelling. On this he repeated the move played by the antagonist of the Automaton, and on this he likewise concocted his scheme of action, and made his answer, before playing it on the Automaton's own board, through the agency of Mr. Wood's digits. A very interesting and ingenious part of the secret consists in the manner in which the move played by the stranger was communicated to the concealed artist; and on this, in point of reality, turned the whole thing. A third chess-board, blank, with the squares numbered according to the usual mode of chess notation, was fixed, as it were, in the ceiling of the interior; thus forming the reverse of the table on which the Automaton really appeared to play. Now, the men with which the Automaton conducted his game were all duly magnetized at the foot; and the move being made above, the magnets on the pieces moved set in motion certain knobs, or metallic indices, adapted to each square of the board on the reverse; and thus was the requisite knowledge of the move played communicated to Jack-in-the-box. To illustrate this more clearly would require the aid of engravings; but we have given the explanation at least sufficiently distinct for our purpose. The real Simon Pure, shut up in his cell, saw by the light of his taper the metallic knobs, or indices, above, vibrating, so as to mark the move just played. He repeated this move on his own little board, calculated his

answering "coup," and guided the Automaton's fingers, in order to its being duly performed. The happy association of magnetism with the figure, thus hit upon by De Kempelen, was probably suggested to him by the magnetic experiments of Pelletier, at the court of the empress.

Tedious as a "twice-told tale," is the dwelling too long on the reading a riddle. When known, its solution seems simple enough; but the difficulty lies in its original construction. The Automaton Chess-player affords strong evidence of the fallibility of human judgment and human testimony. Thousands of individuals have seen its performance in Spring Gardens, and St. James's Street, who would have had no scruple about taking their oaths that they had viewed the whole of the interior of the engine at once. In this respect, the ingenuity displayed by its original constructor is above praise. Man loves so to be duped!

In estimating the difficulty of the problem, be it remembered, that *it was never solved*, until one of the parties implicated in the fraud turned king's evidence. Several persons almost hit the mark; but none fairly planted his arrow in the gold. Had such been the case, a double of the Automaton would probably have started; indeed, as it is, we are of opinion that a similar figure would prove a first-rate speculation, in a pecuniary point of view, could the moving principle of action be changed, as it easily might, by a clever mechanic.. A man inside will, most assuredly, never again work the charm; but, advanced as is science during the present generation, a Brunel or a Stephenson could easily, and successfully, vary the deception.

Referring back to our definition of the word automaton

it must now be clear that De Kempelen's figure came not within the meaning of the phrase. "The movements which spring from mechanism," says Mr. Wallis, most truly, "are necessarily limited, and uniform. It cannot usurp and exercise the faculties of mind. It cannot be made to vary its operations, so as to meet the ever-varying circumstances of a game at chess."

The history of the Chess-playing Automaton, subsequently to 1820, may be shortly summed up. Having travelled over the greater part of Europe, it was transported to the United States of America, where for a time it proved that the natives of the New World were made of the same stuff as their elder brethren. Jonathan dropped his dollars freely; and the calculating spirit of the land of stripes and stars, methodist conventicles and chained slaves, slumbered beneath the spell of Maelzel's magic. A German accompanied it, as holding the important post of invisible demonstrator, ordinary and extraordinary. Lynch-law would, doubtless, have been awarded the trio, had the secret been discovered in that sweet land of liberty!

Carrying out the same principle of conduct, the Automaton subsequently took to playing whist, as well as chess. For some years, latterly, the figure has lain in a state of inglorious repose in a warehouse at New Orleans; and there we leave him, fearing the word *resurgam* may not be applied to its escutcheon. A similar bubble once blown, becomes for ever exploded in its pristine form.

Many must be the adventures of the Automaton, lost, unhappily, to the knowledge of man. A being that kept so much good company, during so long a space of time, must, indeed, have gone through an infinity of interesting events. In this age of autobiography, when so many



wooden men and women have the assurance to thrust their personal memoirs on the world, a book on the life and adventures of the Automaton Chess-player would surely be received with proportionate interest. We ourselves recollect once hearing some amusing anecdotes of the thing from Mouret himself. Our limits permit our quoting but a couple of these logwood reminiscences, which we give, by way of wind-up.

In a journey once through a remote part of Germany, the Automaton set up his tent in a small town, where a professor of legerdemain being already in possession of the field, a clash between the interests of the two parties was unavoidable. The Automaton, as the monster of later arrival, naturally put the conjuror on the shelf; and poor Hocus-pocus, in the energies developed by famine, conversant as he was with the art he professed, discovered his rival's secret the first time he witnessed the show. Backed by an accomplice, the conjuror raised a sudden cry of, "Fire! fire!" The spectators began to rush forth in alarm; and the Automaton, violently impelled by the struggles of its inward man, suddenly rolled head over heels on the floor. Maelzel flew to the rescue, and dropped the curtain, before terror had quite driven the imprisoned imp to burst its chain, and rush to daylight.

On another occasion, Messrs. Maelzel and Mouret were exhibiting the Automaton at Amsterdam, when it happened that the former was indebted in a considerable sum of money, relatively speaking, to his agent for his services. In fact, Maelzel, acting on the philosophical aphorism of "base is the slave who pays," had not given poor Mouret a shilling for a twelve-month; and the latter found that, although a spirit of darkness, he could not live upon air.

Mouret was lodged and boarded, but wanted also to eat. It so chanced, under these circumstances, that one day the King of Holland sent a messenger to engage the chief part of the exhibition-hall that morning, for himself and court; and kindly seconded his royal command by the sum of three thousand florins, sent by the same courier. Maelzel proclaims the good tidings; a splendid breakfast is prepared; Mouret is pressed to eat and drink; and the parties are naturally delighted at the pleasing prospect of checkmating royalty. Maelzel hastens to arrange every preparation for receiving the Dutch monarch with "all the honours." The exhibition was to commence at half-past twelve; but, although noon had struck on every clock in the city, Mouret was not at his post. Maelzel inquires the reason, and is told that Mouret has got a fever, and gone to bed. The German flew to the Frenchman's chamber, and found half the story at least to be correct; for there, sure enough, lay Mouret, snugly tucked up in the blankets. "What is the meaning of this?" "I have a fever." "But you were very well just now?" "Yes; but this disorder—O ciel!—has come on suddenly." "But the king is coming." "Let him go back again!" "But what shall I say to him?" "Tell him—mon Dieu!—tell him the Automaton has a sore throat!" "Can you jest at such a moment? Consider the money I have received, and that we shall have the saloon full." "Well, Mynheer Maelzel, you can return the money." "Pray, pray, get up!" "I cannot." "What can I do to restore you?" "Pay me the fifteen hundred francs you owe me!" "This evening!" "No; pay me now—this moment; money down, or I leave not my bed!" The case was urgent, and the means of restoration to health, however desperate, must be adopted. With a heavy sigh,

Maelzel told down the cash ; and never had the Automaton played with so much inward unction as he did that morning. The king declined compromising royalty by entering the lists himself ; but placed his minister-of-war in the opposition chair, and graciously condescended to offer his royal advice in each critical situation of the pieces. The coalition was beaten, and the surrounding courtiers, of course, attributed defeat solely to the bad play of the minister-of-war !

*Westminster Chess Club,  
26 Charles Street, Waterloo Place,  
May 1839.*

## DESCHAPELLES,

## THE CHESS-KING.

THE English play more chess than the French; but the latter can boast of players with whom we have never been able to cope. We love to start with an apparent paradox. Our neighbours on the other side of the herring-pool have always possessed players of so high a pitch of excellence, that they may be fairly styled phenomena; but of artists a grade lower, Britain could at any time shew six for one. The fact is, whatever be the pursuit taken up by the French, there are among them to be found individuals capable of carrying that pursuit to an excess inappreciable by souls of less ardent temperament. The best astronomers, chemists, cooks, mathematicians, dancers, architects, and military engineers, are French. And so it is with chess; while we are content to knock under, and as veteran soldiers, keep our places quietly in the ranks.

The sceptre of chess, in Europe, has been for the last century, at least, wielded by a Gallic dynasty. It has passed from Legalle to La Bourdonnais, through the grasp, successively, of Philidor, Bernard, Carlier, and Deschapelles. It is of the last-named potentate we are about

more particularly to speak,—he being in every respect one of the most extraordinary creations of the past or present day.

No pen is more tenacious than our own of committing the slightest infringement on the delicacy of private character, and none more deprecate the tearing the veil from off domestic life, and exposing a gentleman's household gods to the gaze of the impertinent, provided he intrudes not himself and his affairs upon the public. It is not merely because an individual attains eminence in his particular walk that he should be set up in the pillory, with his family shivering in the cold around him. Only with the public character of the eminent have we an acknowledged right; because the glory of fame is a joint-stock concern, to be shared duly between the individual and the body politic of all civilization. The laurelled hero has knelt at the bar of public opinion, and is ordered to rise "good man and true." He is called to the front of the stage, that the pretty women in the boxes may pelt him with roses. In recognising his excellence we share his triumph, and become the jealous guardians of his future fame. When we meet him in the market-place, we point him out to our children, that they, too, may be able to say hereafter, they "have known the man."

What chess-player has not heard of Deschapelles? And where dwelleth the follower of our magic art who will refuse to kneel at bidding, "*en preux chevalier*," to do homage in all *devoir* to his chivalrous leader? A health to the king of chess! the lord of the ebon and silver field,—the terrible and the mighty! A health to Deschapelles, and pass the bowl round, while we briefly sketch forth his long career of glory.

M. Guillaume Le Breton Deschapelles (the latter being his "*nom de terre*") was born some sixty-seven years back, with a brain of so perfect an organization for the acquirement of games of skill, that it may be fairly said, the world never, in this respect, saw his equal. Whatever game he at any time took up, he immediately fathomed, and this in a manner so comprehensive, as to rank him in each particular pursuit, not merely as first-rate, but as **THE FIRST**. Chess, billiards, Polish draughts, trictrac, and whist, were acquired by him with the same facility with which smaller men learn cribbage or dominoes. At a glance, he could take hold of that which to souls of different organization would have required the study of years; and in three days he had the capacity of going farther, in whatsoever particular sport he practised, than others could attain in a lifetime.

In early youth, M. Deschapelles did not discover that he was possessed of the faculty in question. His father was gentleman of the bedchamber to Louis XVI.; and his elder brother, as an equally attached partisan of the monarchical system, filled the same situation subsequently at the court of Charles X. Deschapelles himself, on the other hand, was strongly imbued with the revolutionary spirit of the day; and, his principles being well known, he was spared the persecutions to which his family was exposed from the leading chiefs of the first revolution. When the youth of Paris went forth, in their pride of country and fever of blood, as volunteers against the Prussians, M. Deschapelles marched in the van. In an early engagement with the enemy, he was unfortunately one of a foot regiment which was exposed to the overwhelming shock of a large body of Prussian horse. His skull was

laid bare by a sabre, and a second gash traversed his face diagonally from brow to chin. His right hand was severed from his arm at the wrist, and as he lay stretched on the ground in this sad state, fainting and bleeding apparently to death, by way of climax, the Prussian regiment rode over his body. M. Deschapelles recovered, by a miracle; and we leave it to the scientific physiologist to say, whether these sabre wounds of the head had any share in exciting his brain to that fervent pitch of imagination, without which genius lives not. Once more in Paris, a cripple, and shorn of his right hand, M. Deschapelles received support from the government of the day, and was transferred to the commissariat; of which branch of the army, as an active member, he subsequently made the chief campaigns of the consulate and the empire, under the especial protection of Fouché.

Chess-players ourselves, we shall dwell but lightly on M. Deschapelles' acquirement and practice of other games; nor need we care for the charge of anachronism, incurred, we doubt not, justly, in our memoranda. Beginning with trictac, a most difficult and complicated game, elder parent of backgammon, we record the fact, that M. Deschapelles is even now considered the first player in France; in which country trictrac is more played than in any other in Europe.

As a billiard-player, M. Deschapelles suffers under the disadvantage of having but one hand; nevertheless, as a mere practical player, he is allowed to be of the third or fourth grade of force; and as a judge of the game is universally placed first in the kingdom. "M. Deschapelles knows the game better than any man in France," said, in our hearing, M. Eugene, the Kentfield of Paris at the present day.

The mode in which Deschapelles acquired Polish draughts is very curious. For a long time this scientific game had been popular in France; its head-quarters being the Café de Manoury, from whence the amateurs of draughts were, however, at one time, temporarily expelled during the first French revolution, from their being a body of men at that time too poor in pocket to answer the purpose of a wealthy coffee-house keeper. During their wanderings in the desert, they settled for a time in an "entresol" near the Café de Manoury, and there the banner was pitched, under the leading of M. Chalon, the first player of Polish draughts at that time in France, and author of some curious printed problems on the subject. This gentleman was the successor of Blonde, Manoury, and others of the *élite*, and gave odds to all with whom he played,—daily keeping the lists for hours against all comers. Deschapelles took it into his head to play Polish draughts. He walked one fine day into the sanctum, learned the moves and laws by looking on for half an hour, and then challenged M. Chalon to play. The latter gave the odds of two men, and they played thus daily for a few days, when the odds were diminished to one man. After a month, they were brought down to the half man; and at the end of three months, M. Deschapelles challenged Chalon to play even. They did so, and the former was the Conqueror. Chalon wished to continue; Deschapelles declined, in the following pithy terms:—

"I have looked through your game," said he, in his peculiarly quiet tone, "and I find but little in it. At one time, played by gentlemen, it might have been worth practising; but it is now kicked out from the drawing-room to the ante-chamber; and my soul is above the place of lacqueys. In three months I have become your equal, in



three months more I could give you a pawn ; but I renounce the pursuit, and bid you farewell. I shall never play draughts again !”

This mode of speech may be termed gasconade, but it is characteristic of the man, and we can but view it as emanating from the simplicity of a Hercules, in the knowledge of his vast strength. Conscious pride is not boasting. The braggart is he who threatens that which he cannot execute. “M. Deschappelles boasts ; but, then, the devil of it is, he acts up to what he boasts !” quoth M. Chalon, sententiously, as his conqueror walked forth from the arena.

The difficulty of acquiring Polish draughts is almost commensurate with that of learning chess. As a proof of this, the renowned Philidor, though he played Polish draughts for many years, and worked hard at the game, was never equal to those, like Chalon, of the first grade. There were always draught-players who could give Philidor odds ; and this determined him, probably, to confine himself to chess, in which, like the lion of the desert, or the eagle of the Alps, he reigned without a rival. The Polish draught-players have long since returned to the Café de Manoury, and the most skilful player there told us (*in the flesh, some six weeks back*), that he should consider seven or eight years a reasonable time to be spent in getting up to the odds of one pawn !

The best proof of M. Deschappelles’ transcendent skill in whist is, perhaps, to be gathered from the fact of his having won several thousand pounds at that game ; on the interest of which he now chiefly lives. His fame as a whist-player is, indeed, European, and is echoed from the halls of the Travellers’ and Crockford’s, to the *salons* of the

German spas, in all of which M. Deschapelles is ranked as the first living whist-player. Since the breaking up of the Salon des Etrangers, he now chiefly plays in a private club. So great is the confidence of his followers, that we have been gravely informed a quarter of a million of money could be deposited to back any match of whist he might undertake; and this seems the less improbable, as we know of several wealthy bankers who are proud to enrol themselves on his list of devotees. A match was made some years back, between the British Lord G—— and M. Deschapelles, at whist, for two hundred thousand francs; but was stopped, ere commenced, by our countryman's just fears of the thing being viewed in Downing Street as *infra dig.*—a consideration naturally influenced by the discovery that the money on the part of the French player was to be forthcoming in shares. It is understood that M. Deschapelles is at length about to favour us with the publication of his Treatise on Whist, on the manuscript of which, we know he has laboured at intervals during the last twenty years. Such a work will be indeed a treasure; and we are informed (and most cordially do we wish such *annonce* may be correct), that so comprehensive is the Treatise on Whist of M. Deschapelles, that it will run to an octavo of 500 pages! It is curious to see the veteran collect the cards with his ONE LEFT HAND, sort, play, and gather them in tricks. M. Deschapelles chiefly now plays shorts. From cards, pass we to their progenitor—CHESS.

It has been well said, "there is no royal road to learning;" but M. Deschapelles laughed the proverb to scorn, and arrived at the temple of Caissa by a path which we can only consider as first-speed "railroad." Endowed with so peculiar an aptitude for acquiring games, our hero did

not learn, but seized on chess at once. By a sudden and mighty impress, he stamped it on his brain, and bore it ever afterwards, bodily, within him, perfectly developed in all its parts.

"I acquired chess," said he to us, in the presence of fifty amateurs, "in four days! I learned the moves, played with Bernard, who had succeeded Philidor as the sovereign of the board; lost the first day, the second, the third, and beat him even-handed on the fourth; since which time I have never either advanced or receded. Chess to me has been, and is, a single idea, which, once acquired, cannot be displaced from its throne, while the intellect remains unimpaired by sickness or age."

At first reflection, it would appear ridiculous to say the greatest chess player of the age had acquired his skill in four days; but M. Deschapelles asserts it as a fact, and we are therefore bound to believe it. We heard a wag whisper, that, like the interpretation put by Dr. Buckland on the seven days of Moses, each day must have meant, at least, a year, or more; but we seriously protest against ill-natured scepticism. It is so delightful to sneer at enthusiasm, particularly on the part of the small-souled and envious! We view the brain of M. Deschapelles as a phenomenon, and not, therefore, to be measured by ordinary rules. Besides, his assertion, however startling, is really borne out by the following extraordinary fact, with which both Paris and London rang loudly at the time.

When the question of M. Deschapelles' chivalrous challenge to give pawn and two to the best English player (of which more anon) was on the tapis, in the month of May, 1836, the French champion, who had not played a single game, nor even touched a chess-board, *for fifteen years*,

felt some curiosity to know what effect this long interval of inactivity would have had on his chess faculty. To test this, he suddenly walked into the Paris Chess Club; and, without the slightest preparation, sat down to play with M. de la Bourdonnais, at that curious variety of chess known as "the game of the pawns," in which the one player removes his queen, and is allowed, instead, a certain number of extra pawns. Deschapelles and De la Bourdonnais played four games at this sitting, even,—that is to say, eight pawns being allowed alternately for the queen. Of these games Deschapelles won two, drew one, and lost one! Can words add to this astonishing feat?

Stimulated by some "good-natured" remarks of the by-standers, as to the game of the pawns not being the ordinary game, M. Deschapelles renewed his visit to the club once more during the week, and played three games of the usual species of chess with M. St. Amant, giving the latter the pawn and two moves. Of these games each party won one, and the third was drawn. Be it remembered, that St. Amant, a few weeks afterwards, played in London with our first players, even, *and beat them all round*. M. Deschapelles was now satisfied that his chess organ existed unimpaired; and has never played since, to the deep regret of his contemporaries.

The truth of phrenology is strongly borne out by the conformation of Deschapelles' forehead; in which the organ of calculation is more considerably developed than in that of any other human being we ever saw. A high and sharp ridge stands forth as the boundary of his fine, square forehead; attracting, at the first glance, the earnest attention of the disciples of Combe and Spurzheim.

We may here remark that M. Deschappelles never studied the theory of chess, nor looked at any work existing on the subject. With the usual openings he is, therefore, comparatively unacquainted, and has to find the correct move always in play. In some pools of chess which he once played, even, with Cochrane and La Bourdonnais, he found this to be a disadvantage, and was compelled to play more slowly than either of his two formidable antagonists. Indeed, quickness of play was never the *forte* of M. Deschappelles; he always having been much more "English" in this respect than La Bourdonnais, his successor; who is the quickest player we ever looked over. Deschappelles' wonderful talent is the most keenly excited in crowded positions on the board. Here, that which is Cimmerian darkness to the bystanders, is to him light as noon. Could we acquire chess as easily as it would appear we might, from his mode of speaking on the subject, much joy were ours. "For my part," says Deschappelles, "I look neither to the right nor to the left; but I simply examine the situation before me, as I would that of two hostile camps, and I do that which I think best to be done. I want to checkmate; I do not want to capture, to defend, nor to attack. I repeat, I want to checkmate, *et voilà tout*."

On this phenomenon chess-player's first dropping from the clouds, he was immediately hailed as the greatest artist since Philidor. The Paris players, at this time, were temporarily removed from the Café de la Régence, owing to a prejudice against the latter *locale*, arising, naturally enough, from the fact of the café's having been the constant resort of Robespierre. The head-quarters of the chess amateurs were, however, not far away from the old spot; and there, at the head of the veteran band, was the youthful Des-

chapelles installed as lord of the ascendancy ; playing constantly, save when his duties called him to more stirring scenes ; which, indeed, was the case for the greater part of his time, thanks to the restless energies of his mighty master, Napoleon.

Having perched himself, at one bold bound, on the very topmost branch of the tree, Deschapelles invariably gave odds. He may be said to have formed the modern school of French players ; the chief of his pupils being M. de la Bourdonnais, Mouret, &c. With the former of these artists, Deschapelles played many hundred games, either giving eight, and receiving seven, pawns for the queen, or else allowing pawn and two, at the ordinary variety of the game. When, falconlike, he found the young bird strong enough to plume its wings and fly alone, Deschapelles retired altogether from the arena, and left the mantle of inspiration to be draped around the broad shoulders of his worthy successor, De la Bourdonnais. For the want of similar models of excellence to play up to, we doubt whether England will ever possess a really first-rate player. Certainly, since the days of Philidor, none, save the late Mr. M'Donnell, have appeared, *to us*, to hold a just claim to the appellation.

We proceed to give one of M. Deschapelles' chess adventures, in his own words :—

“ I never thought, nor do I believe, that a player of my force could ever appear from the chilly regions of the north. A southern sun can alone organize a brain of sufficient chess-genius to cope with me. In proof of this, hear what happened in Prussia. After the battle of Jena, in 1806, our army entered Berlin. The ladies there, having expressed wonder at our rapid march, were told politely, by one of the French officers, ‘ We should have arrived here even twenty-four

hours sooner, had we not met with some slight obstacles on the way!—these slight hindrances to the journey being an army of 300,000 men, whom we were forced to overturn to get past! Well, I lodged at the house of a colonel of the Prussian national guard, who, the very first evening, took me to the celebrated Berlin chess club, instituted by the great Frederic himself.

“A numerous party of amateurs were assembled to receive me; the lists were pitched, the arms in order, The three strongest heads of the club were opposed to mine. Before playing, in the course of some preliminary conversation, I asked whether any foreigner of my acquaintance had ever enjoyed the honour of an introduction. The reception book being produced, displayed a number of names, French, English, and so forth, but not one whom I knew. ‘Which party has been chiefly victorious, yours or your visitors?’ demanded I. ‘Oh!’ replied they, cavalierly enough, ‘our club have always come off winners.’ ‘Very well,’ replied I; ‘such will not be the case this time.’ ‘Why?’ ‘Your club must lose!’ Fancy the sensation produced by these words! They all gathered round, and a noise like Babel broke forth; from which issued such expressions, from time to time, in German, as, ‘Oh, what insolence! What presumption! We’ll punish him!’

“Before playing, it is necessary to settle the terms. I at once declared I never played even, and offered the pawn and two. ‘What is your stake?’ was their question. ‘Whatever sum you please,’ answered I; ‘from a franc to a hundred louis.’ They now said they never played in the club for money. I thought to myself, if that be the case, why ask me what my stake was? But I let that pass; and the three best players sat down to play against me. Not only did I insist upon their consulting together, but I further authorized every member of the club to advise them as he might think fit. It was agreed we should play even, in other respects; and as they obstinately refused odds, I resigned myself and them to fate.

“The move was drawn for, and gained by me. I played the king’s gambit. They took and defended the pawn. Feeling a little sore at what had passed, I thought the less ceremony was necessary; so, on the eleventh move, I got up, and told them, in an off-hand way, that it was useless to continue the game, as I had a forced mate in seven

moves, which I detailed to them. I then appeared as if about to leave the room, accompanied by my host, and a friend, a cavalry colonel in our service; who, being very fond of chess, had come to take part, as second, in the duel.

"The members of the club crowded round, and, changing all at once their tone, asked me politely to favour them with another trial. Finding my gentlemen, this time, so much more modest (a quality which pleases me), I softened, and remained to play another game; in which, having the move, they began by advancing the queen's pawn two squares. The contest was rather longer than the first, but I was again the conqueror; and such being the case, could not help taking upon myself the tone of a master, and pointing out to them different moves, of the effects of which they had shewn themselves ignorant, and which I advised them to study.

"The *corps d'armée* to which I was attached left Berlin, but we again occupied that city after the battle of Eylau: and, in the public walks, I met with several members of the club, who entreated me to visit them a second time. I told them frankly, I had no objection to doing so, but should decline again playing even with them; that such a sorry joke should be carried no further; and that I would only resume the engagement on their taking such odds as I was prepared to offer. 'What are those odds?' asked they. '*The rook!*' answered I, without hesitation. 'And would you play for money, giving us the rook?' 'Yes; for a hundred louis, as I told you before.'

"Again did they decline any stake, and, at least, acted with prudence in so doing. We played three games. I drew the first, won the two others, and the next day left Berlin for Hamburg. I did not expect much from them; Berlin is so cold! Besides, for twenty years, I gave the pawn and two moves to the first players in Europe, be they whom they might, when they presented themselves; and would do so still."

To hear M. Deschappelles narrate his chess doings, with the real spirit of military frankness, is one of the pleasantest things in the world. That he has preserved none of the games, or curious chess positions, which have occurred to him, is to be deplored, when we know how vast a



chess acquaintance he has enjoyed, the circle with whom he has played, including the leading players of his time, as well as those who have been famous in more important matters,—as Ney, Fouché, Junot, and Louis Buonaparte. We own we think he underrates the skill of the Germans; and regret he never played with Allgaier, Silberschmidt, or Witholm. Deschapelles once challenged Stein to play at the Hague; but the latter preferred resting on his reputation, and declined accepting the invitation.

It is currently rumoured in the French metropolis, but we know not whether on certain grounds, that M. Deschapelles revenged France on Marshal Blucher, by teaching the latter, to the tune of thirty thousand francs, that he knew much less of manœuvring troops on the field of chess, than on the plains of real war. If this be true, Blucher is not the only German who has paid high for the lesson of experience in chess; witness Count d'Armstadt, and others we could quote, as fitting companions in folly.

In the year 1821, Mr. Lewis, the writer on chess, went over to Paris, for the purpose of playing a match at Frascati's with Deschapelles. The necessary arrangements were made by M. la Bourdonnais, as umpire; and the odds of the pawn and move were unwillingly agreed to be yielded by the Frenchman, he wishing to give instead, pawn and two, and to play for a larger sum than his adversary chose to consent to. Of the three games constituting this match, two were drawn, and one was gained by our countrymen. It is certain that M. Deschapelles was not in play on this occasion; for we find him over-looking winning moves, and in other respects wanting in his usual fertility of resource.\* He was taken unawares by an

---

\* In proof of our assertion we append, from "Bell's Life," one of the games played by MM. Deschapelles and Lewis, with a most judi-

opening of the game he had never previously encountered; and, from the fine attack Mr. Lewis invariably acquired thereby, the wonder is that the latter did not gain a more honourable triumph. M. Deschapelles felt his real superiority; and, on the match being over, challenged his opponent to a renewal of hostilities; offering publicly to give him the pawn and two moves in a match of twenty-one games, and play for any sum of money which might be required. Mr. Lewis declined playing a second match, whether at the odds of pawn and move, or pawn and two moves; and was, doubtless, justified in following out the

cious critique, on an important move. The second player's K.B.P. must be removed from off the board prior to attempting to play out the game.

## MR. LEWIS.

1. K. P. two.
2. Q. P. two.
3. Q. P. one.
4. B. pins Kt.
5. B. takes.
6. B. to Q. third.
7. K. Kt. to K. second.
8. Q. Kt. to Q. second.
9. Q. Kt. to K. B. third.
10. K. Kt. to Kt. third.
11. K. R. P. one.
12. P. retakes B.
13. Q. to K. second.
14. Q. to K. B.
15. Q. to K. Kt. second.
16. K. R. P. one.
17. Q. to R. third.
18. Q. B. P. one.
19. K. to K. second.
20. Q. R. to Q. Kt.

## M. DESCHAPELLES.

1. Q. Kt. to B. third.
2. K. P. two.
3. Q. Kt. to K. second.
4. Q. P. one.
5. Q. retakes.
6. K. Kt. P. one.
7. K. B. to R. third.
8. K. Kt. to B. third.
9. Castles.
10. Q. B. to Kt. fifth.
11. B. takes Kt.
12. K. B. to B. fifth.
13. K. R. to B. second.
14. Q. R. to K. B.
15. K. to corner.
16. Q. to Q. second.
17. Q. to Q. R. fifth.
18. Q. to Q. R. fourth.
19. Q. to Q. Kt. third.
20. Q. B. P. one.

adage of "let well alone." Messrs. Brand, Cochrane, and other first-rate English players, were all defeated by Deschapelles, at the odds of the pawn and two; and it is matter of wonder Deschapelles never followed up his con-

## MR. LEWIS.

21. K. R. P. one.
22. P. takes B.
23. K. R. to R. second.
24. K. to Q. second.
25. K. to Q. B. second.
26. Q. R. to K. B.
27. P. takes P.
28. Q. to K. sixth.
29. K. R. home.
30. Q. to K. B. fifth.
31. K. R. to R. second
32. K. to Kt.
33. P. takes P.
34. Q. takes K. R. P.
35. K. to Q. B. second.
36. Q. to K. Kt. sixth.
37. B. takes Q.
38. B. takes K. R. P.
39. R. retakes.
40. K. takes.
41. R. to K.
42. R. to K. fourth.
43. R. to K. R. fourth.
44. R. to K. R. fifth.

## M. DESCHAPELLES.

21. B. takes Kt.
22. P. takes R. P.
23. K. R. to K. second.\*
24. K. R. to K. B. second.
25. Q. to K. sixth.
26. Q. to Q. Kt. third.
27. P. retakes.
28. Q. to Q. B. second.
29. Q. R. to K.
30. Q. P. one.
31. Q. to Q. third.
32. Q. R. to K. B.
33. Kt. retakes.
34. Kt. takes Q. B. P. ch.
35. R. to Q.
36. Q. takes Q.
37. R. to K. Kt. second.
38. R. takes B.
39. K. takes.
40. K. to Kt. third.
41. K. to K. B. fourth.
42. R. to Q. second.
43. K. to his third.
44. R. to K. B. second.

The remainder was not taken down. M. Deschapelles, by his last move, wins a pawn, and the result was a drawn game.

\* M. Deschapelles here overlooks the circumstance of his having a forced won game, simply by playing Knight to King's Kt. fifth. If the knight be taken with Pawn, Rook checks; and if the Knight be not taken, Queen can check at K. sixth, &c., &c. The French player appears to have discovered his error when too late; for we find him, on the following move, attempting to regain the same position. The latter part of the game is weakly played by the English champion.

quests, by fighting us islanders on our own ground. We are happy to believe it is not improbable he may come to London, even during the present winter. He admires British institutions; and should, therefore, favour us with the visit so long due, though never as yet granted to the solicitations of his English friends.

Although Deschapelles was one of those who took the lead in establishing the Paris Chess Club, he accepted no part in the match played by that society, in correspondence, with the Westminster Club. His name was, however, invaluable, as an auxiliary towards inducing recruits to join the newly raised tri-colour. Tired of the heat, the noise, and the crowd who throng the Café de la Régence, it was quite a relief for the elect to find themselves established in a suite of lofty and spacious rooms. We are glad to find this honourable society flourishing as it deserves; increased and increasing in vigour, in numbers, and in talent; including in its list of members Mery, Lacretelle, Jouy, and other *litterati*; headed by Boissy d'Anglas, and a numerous sprinkling of nobility.

And let us, *en passant*, congratulate the amateurs, here, of our noble and soul-stirring recreation, upon the prospect which at length dawns upon us, of having a first-rate chess club at the west-end of our own metropolis. For years has the attempt been made, at intervals, to institute a similar society, and hitherto has that attempt uniformly failed. But the time is now come when, based upon solid grounds, a fabric is, even as we write, rising out of earth, destined to meet and to withstand the heavy storms of time and chance. Prosperity to the Westminster Chess Club! Remodelled and improved in its constitution, there can be little fear of its success, backed as it is by the first chess

talent of the metropolis, at the head of so formidable a phalanx of amateurs. When first established in Bedford-street, this society looked well ; but its *locale* was far too eastern for the aristocratic patrons of the science. Over-shadowed as it has been for the two last years, it now again proudly erects its head, determined to shew that it has but stooped to rise with increased vigour. Removed to first-rate rooms (in Charles Street, Waterloo Place), with but a three-guinea subscription, and no entrance fee, our hopes and wishes are unalloyed by doubt. London shall and will at last have a chess club, commensurate with the improvements of the age, and secure of support from all true lovers and patrons of chess, both in town and country. Return we to our record.

Constituted as is the frame of M. Deschapelles, overflowing with the same fervent feelings of enthusiasm, in age, which the most romantic have conceived in youth, an indomitable love of liberty in the purest sense of the word has more than once led him into trouble. On every subject Deschapelles speaks out as he thinks, reckless of consequences ; and "age cannot tame" his ardent devotion to the cause of civil and religious freedom all over the world. In 1832, having, somewhat imprudently, suffered himself to be named president of a sort of republican society, termed "the Gauls," he incurred a government prosecution, and was even imprisoned, *au secret*, for two or three months. This said band of "Gauls" were none the better, in our opinion, for enrolling among their members that Italian chess-player, Signor Lavagnino, so well known in London. No case could be made out against Deschapelles, and he was honourably acquitted. On the examination of some of the "Gauls," we find the question con-

stantly put by the public prosecutor, as to whether it was not understood that M. Deschapelles was to be declared dictator! This appears to be in the highest degree absurd, and was very properly ridiculed by the *galerie*.

M. Deschapelles' political opinions were expressed as follows, in a conversation we lately held together: "I am," said he, "of no country. Shew me a good man, and I will try to be his brother. But were I to choose, though I have never seen England, and understand not your language, I am more a Briton than anything else. I love your country, in the firm belief that your admirable political constitution gives to man all of liberty which he is as yet sufficiently civilized to enjoy without running into licentiousness." Is this a man to be reasonably obnoxious to the powers of the state? No. He is more of a philanthropist than a politician,—a Howard rather than an O'Connell. It is a trait of his life deserving record, that his elder brother, who was attached to the court of Charles X., and fell into comparative penury after 1830, has been ever since, together with his family, wholly supported by Deschapelles. To shew the facility with which the hero of our sketch can turn his mind to any occupation which may take his fancy, we may state that, having a few acres of ground in the Fauxbourg du Temple, M. Deschapelles has there struck out an improved mode of cultivating melons, for which he has received more than one honourable prize. His fruit is first in the market, and not unfrequently adorns the table of Louis Philippe. M. Deschapelles may be quoted as being superior to Cincinnatus, inasmuch as melons are more refined than cabbages!

It is now about two years since M. Deschapelles sent forth his celebrated challenge to all England, in which he

offered to come to London, and to give the odds of the pawn and two moves to any British player, without exception; the joint sum staked on the issue of the match to be a thousand pounds. He declared himself driven to offer this cartel, which first appeared in the French chess magazine, *Palamede*, in consequence of an English newspaper (*Bell's Life in London*), having appeared to fling some doubts on the truth of his having given the Berlin players the rook in 1806. We have reason to know that M. Deschappelles was misinformed on the point, and that the journal in question meant nothing more than to tickle him good-humouredly into action, on the plan of poking up the lion with a pole to hear him roar. Be this as it may, M. St. Amant made his appearance in London, as the herald of Gaul; and, not satisfied with hurling the glove in the faces of our first players, himself inserted the challenge formally in *Bell's Life*,—thus happily making the source of his discontent to serve as the medium through which satisfaction was demanded. The thing was met in a proper spirit on the part of the London Chess Club. A Committee was formed, the five hundred pounds were subscribed in half an hour, and a player of established public reputation was engaged to play the match on the part of our country. At the moment when all were eager for the event, the whole transaction unhappily fell through on this simple point. The London club very properly (as we thought then, and still hold) demanded that, as a starting point, it should be admitted that the challenge originally emanated from the side of France. On the other hand, M. Deschappelles refused all discussion on this part of the topic, and insisted it should not be reopened. Before giving an extract from M. Deschappelles' closing

letter, we take leave to express our sorrow that so promising a beginning should have terminated so badly. Deschappelles still maintains that we were wrong in attempting to revert to the point, which, by commencing a discussion of terms, we had tacitly waved; as also by suffering an outrageously long time to elapse between certain letters, and in not at once declaring the name of the gentleman who was to be his antagonist. Opinions differ, and we choose not to revive unpleasant, and now most needless, discussion.

M. Deschappelles shares in our regret, and is particularly sorry for the abrupt termination of this affair, on account of the consequent non-establishment of the finely conceived code of laws put forth by him to regulate the expected tourney; and forming, as he says, "an everlasting monument of chess legislation!"

From Deschappelles' letter it will be seen that he is still prepared to give pawn and two to all comers who may choose to demand those odds; and this he has recently told us *viva voce*, although he has so long retired from the field of war. We proceed to give a part of his last letter respecting the famous challenge, the wording of which is too characteristic for us to mutilate by translation. It is addressed to the committee of Parisian amateurs who acted in the negociation on his part, and runneth thus:—

"Messieurs,—Il y a plus de trente ans qu'il existe de ma part un défi permanent au jeu des échecs. J'offre le pion et deux traits.

"Je n'y ai mis d'intérêt que celui de soutenir l'école Française, et de créer de belles parties; et si j'a consenti à y engager 500 livres sterling, c'est en vue d'éviter le reproche de forfanterie, et pour satisfaire celui qui, ramassant le gant, se déplacerait pour la gloire et le profit



"Depuis ce jour, je ne sais combien d'apparences se sont élevées, combien de champions se sont présentés ; mais j'affirme qu' aucune réalité ne les a accompagnée, et qu'au moment du combat, sous un prétexte ou sous un autre, aucun n'a voulu exposer quelque chose qui en valût la peine.

"D'ailleurs, chaque fois je me suis prêté à ce dont j'étais prié, y mettant surtout de la complaisance ; et ne prodiguant par les efforts de l'attention pour le stérile plaisir de froisser des amours propres.

"Dans le conflit actuel, né d'une attaque de la presse Anglaise, je n'ai cru d'abord rien trouver qui dût me faire sortir de mon insouciance, et j'ai laissé courir sans même en prendre connaissance, les vaines démonstrations qui pouvaient s'en suivre.

"Cependant, la chose sembla prendre une tournure intéressante ; un comité était nommé de part et d'autre : le prix du défi était fixé, et les fonds se déposaient. On prétendait, et l'on vint m'assurer qu'il ne s'agissait plus que de résoudre les difficultés d'exécution.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Des négociations étaient donc entamées, lorsque tout d'un coup l'Angleterre se ravisa, et, se rejetant en arrière, reprit une question de forme insignifiante déjà expliquée pour en faire un ultimatum.\*

"Retombée inopinément dans les prétextes, je dus juger que l'affaire actuelle ressemblait aux précédentes ; qu'elle ne contenait rien de réel, et qu'elle ne méritait plus que je m'en occupasse. Seulement je me trouvais désobligé, car je m'étais livré à discrétion, et l'on m'y

\* We repeat, that we here take part with the London Club. It was an important point to fix the origin of the challenge, lest it might be supposed England would publicly admit inferiority by asking odds. If a player offer the rook, no honour is lost by putting his pretensions to the test ; but to ask for the rook would be tacitly to avow considerable inequality. Deschappelles told us personally that the challenge in the *Palamede*, and in *Bell's Life*, came from him ; but as the signature was wanting, this could not be authenticated, nor admitted, on the part of the metropolitan players. London meant play, and would willingly make the match *de novo*, were a similar challenge offered, either by M. Deschappelles, or by any other player in the world.

maintenait sans réciprocité ; me faisant subir une position que pour rien au monde je n'aurais voulu infliger à autrui.

“ De quoi eût servi de donner satisfaction sur un point à qui eût conservé seul le droit de rompre sur plusieurs autres ? Un ultimatum est inique quand il n'engage qu'une partie. Avant tout, il fallait se mettre d'accord sur les conventions. Alors Londres et Paris auraient un droit égal de tout terminer par un oui, ou un non.

\* \* \* \*

“ Voici ma réponse de clôture avec la commission Anglaise, et ma proposition sous une forme définitive :—Je donne le pion et deux traits, si un adversaire Anglais se présente. Je m'entendrai avec lui seul. Sa capacité m'est d'avance un garant de son équité ; car l'une marche volontiers de pair avec l'autre.

“ Recevez, Messieurs, l'expression de mon amitié et de mon haut estime.

“ DESCHAPELLES.”

To this letter no reply could be made by the London Club, it being accompanied by an announcement that the Paris committee was dissolved ; and so terminated the negociation, to the disappointment of the numerous admirers of our scientific game. May an opportunity be yet afforded our bravest and our best, of meeting M. Deschapelles on the *champ clos* of the Westminster Chess Club ; there to cross blades, and break a lance to the contending shouts of St. George and St. Denis, for the sake of chess, and of the bright eyes of English beauty, we most are bound to love and bow to.

---

(*This paper was written 1839. M. M. Deschapelles and De la Bourdonnais are both since dead.*)

## A NIGHT IN YORK.

A CHESS ADVENTURE OF 1842.

---

### CHAPTER I.

To the solitary traveller, wearied by the constrained posture, the confinement of his limbs, the cramped circulation of his blood, and the chill of the cold cutting air, all consequent upon a long day's ride outside that now exploded method of transit, an English stage-coach, how pleasant at evening the distant view of the lights of the town to which the wanderer is bound! How preferable its smoky chimnies, to the towering rocks and mountains he has just crossed—how superior its musty, foggy stench, to the odour of the wild heath—its cries of children, and howling of dogs, to the bubbling of the running brooks of the waste. The traveller has at length found an oasis in the great Egyptian desert. He enjoys, in anticipation, all the luxuries of contrast, comprising at this moment the smoking hot supper, the snug fireside, the social chat, the

downy bed, and its genial glow of re-animation to his half-frozen limbs. The cup is filled—happy traveller, if he can raise it to his lips without a slip!

I had left Newcastle-on-Tyne, perched on the roof of a stage coach, one day in the early part of March last, at the unromantic hour of five in the morning, and having been delayed some time at Durham by a broken carriage wheel, reached the good old city of York in safety and darkness, about eight o'clock at night. The day had passed over as cold and cheerless, as are most March days in the north of England, and when at length the mighty towers of York cathedral arose dimly to view, lighted up partially by the faint rays of a full moon, shining through her frosty robe of mist, never did suffering mortal more heartily rejoice in a small way than did I—the cold one! Am I beginning my story too abruptly, or ought I to have prefaced it by proclaiming myself to be a London merchant? Upon this occasion, homeward-bound from Edinburgh, somewhere about 30 years of age, inveterately attached to ease and quiet—to a quiet old book when alone—to a quiet game of chess when with a friend—to a quiet bottle of Madeira with my chess—and to a quiet bright-eyed maiden to fill my glass. For the information of my fair readers, I add that I am extremely handsome (of course), remarkably interesting, and unmarried. This is material to declare, for what lady ever cares the eighteen-thousand'th part of a fly's nose for the adventures of a married man?

I have stated myself to be a chess player, and plead guilty to being one of the most devoted admirers of this fascinating mystery, enrolled on the golden tablets of the followers of Caissa's chequered standard. It is essential

to make this point of my character good, while the stage coach is entering York. I have played chess long—long years—late and early, with all sorts and conditions of men, and proudly write myself down an enthusiast in the cause. About two years ago, we heard in the London Chess Club, that in Constantinople, dwelled a turbaned mufti, whom no Englishman had ever yet conquered in chess. One of our members put £100 in his pocket, took the steam-boat the same afternoon—reached the city of Constantinople—sought out the haughty moslem—vanquished him, after a contest which lasted three days and nights (with short sleep at intervals)—and quitted, triumphant, the fourth morning, for London. That man was I!—I—Alfred Graham. As Shakspeare says, “alone I did it!” And now we’re in Yorkshire again.

The shrill horn of our guard echoed from the walls, as the sluggish coach rolled her heavy body along the narrow streets of York; so narrow, indeed, that in the greater part of them it would be difficult for an honest man to say on which side of the way he was walking. The carriage groaned as if with melancholy at the thoughts of parting, and the same idea doubtless inspired our coachman’s strong right arm, as he laid his whip, with an emphasis, about the panting horses’ sides, by way of bidding them a tender adieu until the morning. We turned sundry corners of streets at increased speed—dashed over two pigs, one cat, and an old woman (poor soul!), reeling home *very* drunk from the York National Temperance Society’s General Annual Meeting. Finally, our Jehu pulled up in good charioteering style at the portals of that famed hostel, the Green Swan; and much comfort was mine at the sight of the group of waiters around its doors. In a minute of

time my foot was on the causeway; in another, I was bustling in the full exercise of that pleasant authority so justly wielded by the man who has got cash in his pocket, burning to be spent.

"Boots! Boots!—here—this way," cried I at the top of my voice, "take my portmanteau,—hold my cloak. I'm tired to death, and sleep here to-night. Where's the chambermaid? I want a bed." "Very sorry, sir," said the chambermaid, a slim thing, with three corkscrew ringlets on each side of her face, doing duty for hair, "extremely sorry, indeed, sir; but its 'Sizes, and all our beds *is* taken by the lawyer gentlemen."

I stood aghast; Priam, when they told him at what a rate his Troy was flaring-up, was hardly my prototype. The "thing" repeated, cuckoo-like, her one note of evil. Probably she thought me deaf.

"Yes, sir. Very sorry, sir. Quite full indeed, sir. Full of lawyers, sir, and *them*-like."

"Hang all lawyers," cried I; "hang all lawyers in general, and York lawyers in particular."

"Yes, sir; certainly sir," grinned Thing; "but for all that, every house in York is *choke* full, and you can't have *no* bed here—not for love nor money; but you may sit up all night by the kitchen fire, in a chair!"

"How remarkably obliging! but never mind. Boots, take all my luggage into the commercial room, and send the head waiter to me."

Mark, and remark, ye who do not play chess, that a game of chess is never lost till it is won. I was desperate, but not checkmated. The roof of the Green Swan was above my head, and the chief waiter, John, and I, were old friends. So, from habit, I resolved to fight out my

losing game coolly, and marched authoritatively into the commercial room. What a Babel presented itself in those four walls !

The room was crowded with men of all sorts. Petty barristers, pompous attorneys, lawyers' clerks, farmers, clod-hoppers, yeomen, bagmen, and a very thin sprinkling of gentlemen. An immense coal fire burnt in the huge grate below. A galaxy of gas flamed forth above. Hades would have been Iceland to it. Meats of all kinds and odours, drinks of every known hue, smells of all shades in infinite variety, tainted the already musty atmosphere to the very extreme of suffocation. Burley Yorkshiremen, summoned as witnesses to the assizes, were gaping, open-mouthed, at the sharp attorneys, who, in most loud and voluble discussion, were fighting the day's battle over again. Slender, palefaced men, the while, were pensively sipping sixpennyworths of gin and water, in far-away corners of the room, too evidently the suffering clients of those same sleek and bellowing orators. Commercial travellers were writing their letters, shaking up their sugar samples, and discussing the current prices of buttons at Birmingham ; cracking loud their merry jokes the while upon the fat knaves around, and not *too* particular as to whether their jests fell like oil of roses, or oil of vitriol. "A delightful party !" thought I, as I elbowed my way through this motley mob, and seized upon a chair by the fire, just vacated by a hungry lawyer, who, having heard that a prisoner had, that moment, been brought in to the city gaol (charged only with cutting his wife's throat a little), had gone suddenly off, at railway pace, to secure the job of defending the cowardly murderer, lest some more active rival should snatch the morsel out of his mouth

What cares a lawyer for what, or for whom he pleads, so as he gets his fee?

Truth to tell, I was not much disposed to view anything at this moment "*couleur de rose*." My soothing prospects of peace and comfort were all fled for the night? "The vanity and vexation of even hope," muttered I to myself, and was thus beginning to do a little philosophy, after the manner of the ancients, when lo! John, the waiter, stood bodily before me, and Hope again flashed up. Alas! it was but the flash of the expiring taper, for John, old acquaintance as he was, came but to confirm the croakings of those ill-omened birds, his lellow ravens. Tranquilly did I listen as John made his moan. The house was full from cellar to garret; the very servants had been *bedless* for a week, and slept (or woke) nightly on the floor; sofas and arm chairs blanketized for the nonce were exhausted; a truss of straw was worth gold. The Green Swan had no one corner in her nest for me that night. All *was* lost, so now was the proper time to go into a passion, and I made myself well up for a row. At the very top of my voice I shouted, and the fattest lawyers in the room were hushed to silence, —one of them almost indeed to apoplexy.

"I demand, John, a bed of your employers, or their rascally conduct shall be posted in every commercial room in Britain. Instead of reserving their beds for the commercial gentlemen, who use the Green Swan regularly, and are bound to receive proper accommodation, they have turned us out to make room for these once-a-year strangers!"

"Shameful, scandalous conduct!" chorused the commercials in a body. I knew I should wake them up. I continued:—"Tell your employers, moreover, John, that



the law itself is on my side, that I came to their tavern by a public vehicle, licensed as their property, that they are bound by the law of the land to take in all travellers, and find them seasonable rest and refreshment, and that a bed I will have here this night!" "Very good," "law quite correct," cried in their turn a couple of dozen lawyers; one especially oily attorney seconding my legal argument, and offered me the card of his firm, in case I should determine on bringing an action. Unanimously was it agreed that I could not fail to get a verdict, particularly if I could manage to lose the use of my legs for life, through being exposed to the cold air of darkness. John's sodden countenance became like unto dirty parchment. I saw my advantage. The nail was driven home, and only wanted clinching! "And John," concluded I, sinking my voice into a Grosvenor Square drawl, "John, as the bed affair will now be settled, tell chambermaid to be sure the sheets are well aired, and to put an extra pillow for my head. And John, get me some little matter directly for supper, for I'm devilish hungry—a roast partridge, grilled chicken and mushroom sauce, a mainenon cutlet, or anything piquante and savoury—some rum, a lemon, and boiling water, and make haste about it, do you hear?"

John made his exit, the assembled company doing a grand chorus to my aria, and the milk of human kindness again began to flow through my veins. The "*vox populi*" is so often the "*vox Dei*," even in an aviary of Green Swans. The politic landlord of a well-frequented inn, will pause ere he pass an affront upon the whole company of a public room, and my cause was clearly the cause of the nation, or at least of such part of Queen Victoria's subjects as were then and there assembled.

In five minutes, parchment John returned with an important protocol from the hostile powers. The lord and lady of the castle would get me a bed out! John's air proclaimed this to be their ultimatum. I am not unreasonable. I never am, when I have anything resembling my own way. The room sanctioned my accession to the preliminaries. I agreed to the terms, accepted the peace treaty, burying (as the Indians say) the hatchet of strife, and lighting the calumet of friendship. I was to vacate the garrison, true, but I was to march out with the honours of war, and a full belly! The game was at least drawn. "See my portmanteau and writing case safely conveyed to my dormitory, which, by the way, John, I bargain as a sort of supplementary private article of the conditions of surrender, shall not exceed fifty yards distance from the Green Swan. Let all be made comfortable, and a good fire lighted in the room. Vanish, John!"

The eternal waiter makes his salaam, but again returns with food and drink. This, too, was quite "*en regle*." In the East, when you "fix" a treaty with any of the barbarian hordes of robbers, they always sign and seal with a smoking hot tray of eatables. So it was here. My fare seemed delicious. I was hungry as Ugolino, when he ate up either his child or himself (I forget which), and I began to devour with most hearty gusto. Alas! fate and I were that night at cross purposes. I had hardly swallowed three mouthfuls of the delicate breast of a pheasant (fairer far to me at that moment than the bosom of Venus!) when nine o'clock struck—and liberated by that sound from the spell previously imposed by rigorous custom—some two dozen cigars began to mingle their odours and incense with the fragrance of my poor little roast; their

vapours resolving themselves into one mighty cloud of tobacco-fog, through which the gaslights peered dim and dun, like stars in a mist. Be it known to the uninitiated, that throughout England, Ireland, and Scotland, no person is allowed to smoke tobacco at an inn, in the commercial room, until nine o'clock at night. Chewing and snuffing the same, are legal at all seasons.

Now, I am myself partial to a cigar—a genteel well-flavoured Havannah—but then it must be used and imbibed as a cigar legitimately, and must be made exclusively of real tobacco, and not of cabbage leaves. I may be singular, but though partial as I say to a cigar “*per se*,” I am but very slightly partial to meat and bread dressed “*alla cigar*,” and still less partial to the second-hand fumes of “the weed,” breathed by turns [through the throats and lungs of a drove of human animals smoking tobacco in company. There is no accounting for taste. On this eventful night, the party assembled evidently differed with me in opinion. The greater my misfortune, the less my fault. Englishmen are justly attached to their rights. Magna Charta says they may smoke at 9 o'clock, and I rarely see the trifling consideration of a fellow traveller's being at supper, or dinner, permitted to trench upon this most glorious privilege of our immortal constitution, as settled by the great revolution of 1688. My supper is spoiled; but I am an ultra-conservative, and feel that vested rights are sacred things. Comfort under disappointment may be frequently drawn from comparison, so I turned my mind to Holland, where men smoke tobacco even as they step into bed on their wedding nights. “John, I have supped, remove the cloth.” And while the tobacco cloud became so deep and dark I could fancy it would

presently explode with thunder and lightning, I whistled "Rule Britannia," and mixed myself a strong glass of punch. Dare fate take this also from me?

Although supperless, my heart had warmed, and a few sips of the punch made me want to talk—but to talk—or rather to converse, is an operation requiring two persons—and I was as much alone in that large room, as if I had stood on Skiddaw mountain. I looked right and left, behind and before, at the surrounding tables, and scanned phrenologically, the feeders, drinkers, and smokers individually, to discover one with whom to converse, but all in vain, nothing suitable presented itself. The endless jargon of the fat lawyers and heavy porkey countrymen rang on as before, while the would-be "fun" of the bagmen continued to vent itself in a flood of conventional jokes and anecdotes of "fast men." All this bored me to death. I felt that for me there existed no one congenial spirit present. True, the commercial travellers would have talked to me; but what cared I whether Jack Jones was addicted to "box Harry Jackson;" or whether Bill Harmer, of Wolverhampton, had got so preciously "cut" the night before, that he slued his "drag" into a ditch, and was found with his mouth half filled with dirty water, protesting he would take no more cold tea! To the aforesaid Bill and Jack it might be deliciously interesting mutually to condole upon the "down" qualities of their "governors" and "clients;" but why—O why, request to know "what I did?" and why endeavour to drag me into a lengthy discussion upon the rudiments and elements essential to the realization of a really "spicey trap;" or the building of a "splash upper Benjamin."

I could not then talk, but I could sing; so I hummed to myself, as I mixed my second tumbler, the old song—

“Punch cures the gout, the cholic, and the pthysic  
And is for all the ills of life the very best of physic.”

My first glass was capital—this is exquisite. They certainly supply very good rum at the Green Swan. My ideas must be confined to my meditations, and my meditations to my glass. I only allow myself *one* tumbler at home; will not this second draught get into my head?—No, no. Really most delicious punch. Beats Horace's Falernian to “immortal smash.” No doubt at all that the nectar quaffed on Mount Olympus by Jove and his court is nothing else than rum punch—hot, sweet, sharp, and strong, seasoned with a dash of the blue flying lightning, and thickened with the melting dew of Hebe's lip. Again chaunteth Anacreon—

“He who drinks, and goes to bed sober,  
Falls as the leaves fall, and dies in October.  
But he who drinks and goes to bed mellow,  
Lives as he ought to live, and dies a good fellow.”

So as that's the case I'll e'en, for once, venture on a *third* tumbler. By Heaven! this is the very absolute rule of progression! Good, better, best. To improve this were as difficult a task as to catch the glowing tints of the rainbow, and bottle them up to paint with. But will not modern science one day accomplish this? I'm getting transcendently poetical, political, vocal, and metaphysical. The punch is terribly strong. That last tumbler was what Jonathan would term a screamer. Nice fellow, that Jonathan! Pretty people those Americans!—with their

stars and stripes! The land indeed of "stripes" par excellence! Talk about liberty, and keep three millions of chained slaves! Confound all politics—certainly the punch is strong—infernally strong—especially upon an empty stomach. I'll go to bed. Good night, lawyers and gentlemen! Chambermaid, shew a light—go ahead, girl, and pilot me safely to the place of my dwelling and my rest. Do you read Byron, chambermaid?—eh?—Well, is this bed far off? Perhaps the Archbishop of York has got a room to lend in his palace? Are we going there, eh?"

With what pleasure do I quit that crowded den—that murky atmosphere,—my fleshpots have mortified like the Israelites' quails in the wilderness—my honey has turned to gall. With a species of loathing I turn from that mob; whose evening hymn has been solely raised to Mammon, the deity of pelf. Rather would I delve the earth—break the rock—raise the sparkling coal for bread, than thus bend the knee to the golden image which Darius the king set up in the plains of Babylon. The third tumbler of punch makes a man so independent!

"This way, sir," said Betsey, that thin thing! as we crossed the threshold, and the cold winds of night greeted me with their bracing welcome. "This way, sir, the house is only the sixth door here." In silence I followed, picking my path through the dirt. The street was dark as sin—every light extinguished—and half the city already tucked up in bed. It was past 10 o'clock, a late hour for any portion of York to be yet waking.

We stopt at a low portal, arched and grim, sombre, and uninviting. Betsey held up her lantern, and with a massive key sought to uncloset the entrance. I could see that

the house was one of those few remaining narrow-fronted old stone buildings, with the gable-end to the street, and one window, or rather loophole, in each story, which we yet inherit from the dark ages. The place seemed antique enough, with its low ponderous Saxon arch, to have been once inhabited by the Saxons themselves, ere the gallant and chivalrous Normans broke the pride of those fair-haired children of the forests, and bowed them down to be serfs and slaves, hewers of wood, and drawers of water, But this "*en passant*." "Here you *be*, sir," said Betsey, as she opened the door, and I followed her steps, shivering and miserable, like a lap-dog condemned to take the water.

The stair was of stone, narrow and winding—the ground floor appeared to be full of rubbish and lumber. I know not why I should have observed all this so minutely. I followed my guide up the first flight of stairs—nothing could have been more desolate and unsatisfactory. The walls seemed crumbling to dust. Paint had never passed that way. Cobwebs covered the roof. "The first floor is not used," said Betsey, "the windows is all broke, and it's so precious cold—your bed's the two-pair." Again we climb, and at the top of the building, I am inducted into the wilderness in which I am to sleep. The place reminded me of a huge prison stone-cell, only larger. All was massive, cold, rough, and wretched; heaped up in dust and desolation, with the single redeeming trait of a good coal fire blazing away on the hearth, giving a fantastic form to the surrounding objects, as its flickering flames played in the smoke. My portmanteau and other effects were duly placed on the floor—that floor fashioned of coarse oak planks, innocent of rug or carpet, and rough as if just

hewn from its parent forest. The roof perfectly matched, being formed of heavy oak beams. Betsey set down the candle, and with a crusty "good night, sir," was about to make off, ere I should decline my bargain. "Stop a minute, Betsey." Now, nothing could have made one stay in this room, but a sort of obstinate feeling of opposition which has haunted me through life, and the thought that at least I should have peace and quiet, even though I sat up all night by the fire. After the noise and din of the Swan's commercial saloon, this rude hut even seemed for the moment a paradise. I love peace, and hate trouble. "It is only for one night," mused I, as I poked up the fire unconsciously with my silk umbrella.

"This is a queer old place, girl,—are there no other lodgers in the house?"

"No, sir, you'll have it all to yourself. Our master's brother, a rich old miser, lived here all by hisself for sixty years, but two months ago—when tatur's riz so—he blowed out his brains all about the place here with a pistol, one morning. *Sich* a mess he made! See, sir, just where you stand; there's all the stains yet of his blood and stuff. Good night, sir, you'll be very comfortable, no doubt. Shall you want to be called in the morning?"

Even this did not daunt me; strong as I was in my third tumbler—God bless it! "But, Betsey," said I, "if I'm all alone here, I shall choose to lock you out below, and have up the key."

"Certainly, sir, come down *arter* me and fasten the door. When old Geoffrey lived here, two men *was* hanged for breaking into this very house. They 'd got his money, and had half strangled him; when his cries brought the neighbours up, and they *was* taken. But I don't think you'll find it *very lonesome*."



I lighted my fair and instructive guide forth; locked, bolted, and barred, the heavy outer door—performed the same ceremony to the door of my room; looked into an empty corner closet, as well as under the bed; listened at the casement for a moment to the groans of the night breeze, and to the dying echoes of Betsey's clogs, and then first thought of the necessity of making a voyage of discovery into the interior of the bed itself. The repast was very unsatisfactory. From the dilapidated tester of the massive old bedstead, "*two hundred years of filth looked down upon me.*" The curtains had been once of crimson damask,—they now waved in the wind, mere broken rags of hue indescribable. The "*tout ensemble,*" bedding, blankets, and sheets, had a fusty, musty taint; which, however delicious it might have been to an antiquarian, so plainly spoke to my olfactory nerves as to the sordid and dirty habits of its last interesting occupant, that I at once resolved—it would not do. The little remaining furniture of the room was quite of the same character—ancient, ponderous, and worn to the skeleton, by time and use, and woodworms. I kicked a heavy chair to the front of the fire, and planting myself therein, with my feet almost on the embers, held a council of war,—the one sweet drop in the cup being the fact that the supply of fuel was a perfect coal-mine, and that I was therefore at least not likely to be frozen to death.

"Devilish queer 'work this!" said I to myself, aloud; "a pretty cut-throat hole I've put my foot in! I must sit up here all night, that's clear. What a fool I was not to bring some more punch with me! I shall never be able to sleep in this chair. I never could sleep in my whole life in coach, ship, chair, or steamboat. Nice quiet evening

I'm spending! Not even a newspaper to read, and that old Geoffrey without his brains. Pah! what an absurd story." At this moment an abrupt squeaking sound made me turn my head, and to my horror I saw a couple of large rats gnawing away at my portmanteau. I jumped up, but they made good their retreat to a great hole in the wainscoting. I stopt up the aperture with a bed pillow, and began to walk the quarter-deck, like a sailor keeping his watch. Of this, however, I soon tired, and bethought me that I yet possessed one resource; so pulling out from my portmanteau my travelling chess board and chess men, I sat down to enjoy, with their assistance, the study of the last number of Saint Amant's *Palamede*, which I had received from Paris on my journey, and which, luckily, was a mine unexplored.

As I looked over the classic instructions of Calvi, and worked out some of D'Orville's beautiful problems, I felt that chess was laying me under a fresh obligation, to be added to the many bonds in which she had already bound me. Was it nothing thus to wield a magic key, able to open the fabled cavern of treasures explored by Ali Baba? Was it not immense, that setting time and place at defiance, I was thus enabled to abstract my thoughts from all the earth, even from old Geoffrey without his brains, and fix them upon the solution of some of the most brilliant enigmas which the mind of man can produce? Yes, inwardly did I vow never to relax in my enthusiastic efforts to promote the general knowledge of a science so rich and varied as chess. Totally absorbed in the study before me, time flew quickly by. Problem after problem was unriddled, opening after opening was scanned and critically analyzed. Chess would have found me in mental food till

daylight, had it not been for a fresh and most annoying *contretemps*. My candle, long since burnt down unheeded to the socket, now went suddenly out. Why had Betsey, the fool, not left me a second candle? and why are not candles made to burn all night? This last blow struck home to my heart, and I felt the more out of humour, having myself to blame for want of foresight. Going into a passion will not, however, make either candles (or soap). I partly walked away my spleen by the glimmer of the fire, and with a sigh, abandoned all further struggle with my wretched destiny. "Human life itself is but a bubble and delusion," said I, as I seated myself moodily at my narrow window, and looked out upon the night. I was as sulky as Diogenes in his tub, and my tub was assuredly not the more comfortable of the two.

I say I looked forth upon the night. The moon, previously obscured, was now riding high in her silver chariot, masked at intervals by stormy wreaths of fleecy cloud, which swept rapidly across the heavens in varied shapes, impelled by the cold March winds. The light of the night-queen played fantastically upon the buildings below, colouring them with those brilliant tones of silver and ebony, so dear to the painter and the poet. Except myself, all York seemed at rest, and as I peered through the lattice, full down upon a very small and antique church facing my lair, I could fancy myself the one living being left to tenant the city of the dead. The clock of the cathedral tolled the hour of midnight, and its deep tones fell upon my soul with a soothing feeling of quiet sadness. No ruffled emotion remained in my breast, but all within became calm and quiet as the moonlight scene without. I watched the old church as it slumbered in its silver hue,

and fell into a train of sombre, but not unpleasing meditation.

All who are acquainted with York, know that there remains in its streets, a number of tiny gothic churches, sorrowing relics of those times when York lorded it over the north, in all the pomp and glitter of the brightest days of Rome's brilliant church. These venerable remains of the bygone dynasty are of various periods, and their architecture proportionally antique and *bizarre*. Perhaps, in all York, the most odd-looking of this odd church family, was the building now "*en face*." Its Gothic square tower, pointed at every angle with broken heads and limbs of griffins, owls, and satyrs, yet reared its head on high, as if to testify to the shame heaped upon the Protestant Reformation by the excesses of its Puritan mob-kings. The body of the church was ridiculously small, compared with the tower, resembling a child or dwarf with an enormous head, but similarly adorned with shivered and tattered relics of most quaint and able carving. The pitcher was "broken at the fountain," but its fragments yet spoke of the master hand who had originally fashioned it from the clay and the quarry. In truth, this humble church had once formed a part of that celebrated convent of nuns, dedicated to Santa Dominica, as early as the thirteenth century. The convent itself has long since vanished from earth, buttress and refectory, cell and keep; its site now covered with the busy haunts of bustling worldlings; but the church yet survives the shock, and stands proudly forth like a landmark to say the tempest has passed that way, and may return—nodding slowly, though, to its downfall, through the several centuries of time it has yet force to encounter, each enemy stripping its hoary head of some

one yet remaining lock of silver hair. At the time of these, my musings, lighted up by the moonbeams, that wan church seemed to meet my gaze with the sadness of one doomed, with numbered days, to abide the common lot of all. Surely to the reflective mind there is a link of sentient brotherhood between man and a building like this—the offspring of man, the wonder of his hands, the child of his old age. “Why, O Plato,” asked a disciple, “should’st thou be sad at the thoughts of death, knowing that no act or reflection of thine can avert its blow, and that its coming may not be retarded beyond the appointed time.” “And for that very reason am I sad,” replied honest Plato.

How grand were the conceptions of the feudal ages!—and how strikingly analogous to the then social condition of man! There was no middle class recognized, either in buildings, or nations, or men, or arts. Palaces, castles, and huts, were fashioned, but houses were not. Robes of ermine and gold brocade were woven, but between them and the rude untanned sheepskin was there but little interval. Cathedrals towered to the clouds, but the churches were so narrow! Kings, and barons, and knights, and bishops, walked the land, and the remainder were serfs, and peasants, and swineherds! Glory to the Luther revolution, which saw the “*tiers état*” arise from its couchant, trampled-down, posture, and erect its form for ever in the face of heaven, with the proud bearing of an equality which never again can be blotted out from the estate of man. I repeat that in the feudal times all was grand, majestic, godlike, dwarfish, puny, and insignificant. Truly it may be said, that in this slender church before me, La Santa Dominica was most humbly lodged! Better surely for the

proud city of Eboracum in which I now breathe, to have had two cathedrals like her one portly pile, than the six and thirty churches yet existing ! Such were the thoughts which chased each other across my brain as I gazed upon the shrine of Santa Dominica, with its narrow windows and its one low-browed portal.

And now I am coming to the inexplicable part of my rambling narrative, but I own I feel much lingering hesitation at writing it down beyond the reach of recall. This is the age of scoffers. Man, as he becomes older on the earth, instead of growing humble from the increased conviction of his nothingness, derived from matured experience, bronzes more and more in unbelief those fine and delicate feelings, without which this world were a mere compound of the shopkeepers' exchange, and the sexton's charnel-house. Man himself, man in the gross, the mass, the species, becomes more and more sceptical, and more and more tyrannical ; not satisfied to enjoy in liberty his own unbelief, without he crush down and extinguish also the creed of those who conscientiously differ with his pompous and self-arrogant conclusions. Man coolly now assumes he knows every thing. He can tell you why the stars revolve in their several orbits, and account (as he thinks) for the most mysterious operations of the great unknown. All who differ with him are "fools" or "madmen." Man, insect man, in his egregious vanity, eager to account for every thing he sees, for the most hidden mysteries of a wondrous unknown, sets up for himself tables of dirt, and dross, and sand, and mirey clay, which he arrogantly styles the "laws of nature ;" and woe and anathema unto those who will not bend the knee to his sculptured image—who cannot and may not frame their

speech to lisp his shibboleth. But on my pen—all armed as thou art in the holy mail of truth, why should the carp of the sneerer stay thee? On my pen in thine own plain path Record what mine eyes have seen—mine ears heard. Be thou strong, my heart, ever thus in the simplicity of thy truthfulness. Moses conversed face to face with his glorious Maker in the burning bush of Jethro, but felt no heat from its burning yellow flames. He humbly doffed his sandals, though, for that the ground whereon he stood was holy before the Lord. A philosopher of the nineteenth century would have put his hat on!

---

## CHAPTER II.

I HAVE said that I looked wistfully and eagerly upon the small church of Santa Dominica now before me, upon its lofty square tower and massive spires, its lowly framed arched windows, its solitary and narrow door. Upon all this did I bend my stedfast and earnest gaze, as if drawn thereunto by some irresistible-magic spell of fascination. Long did I gaze, long did I look, when suddenly by the pale gleam of the moonbeams, I distinctly saw the figure of a man come out alone from the church, by the narrow door, and cross the street with quiet, nay, noiseless tread. What was that to me? I cannot say, but yet my heart throbbed like the moving spirit of some huge steam engine. “As well might

a man come forth from a church as from a house," whispered reason, but she whispered in vain. What could a man be doing in that old church at midnight? Did he live there? My church and I had formed a friendship, and made up together in *tête à tête* a quiet party, why should a third person come between us?—whence arose this intruder to break in upon our meditative colloquy? Had old Geoffrey his burial place in that church, without his brains, and did he roam in quest of them? Was some hungry antiquarian ravaging shrine and grave, and bearing off the relics of the glorious dead as trophies? Ten thousand suppositions flashed across my brain at once, and yet I must say I felt—the violent throbbing of my heart apart—curious, and calculative as to what that being could have been doing there. As the man crossed the street, I had an imperfect view of his figure. He appeared to be tall, and much enveloped in drapery. What was the man to me? What is the church to me?—let me think of something else. But how noiselessly he moved—there must have been some secret, some mystery, and if so, most probably some crime. The man had no light; what then could he do in that church at this wild hour? There is no sound in the street, no footfall on the pavement, the silence of the night remains profound and unbroken. Most inexplicable is this. Do the dead rise from their graves, as the orientals believe, to keep fiendish sabbath with the ghouls and evil spirits?

Psha! what nonsense. I could believe the whole to be a delusion, and that my eyes were indeed "made the fools of my other senses"—but no, there can be no delusion, in one thing I cannot be mistaken, that stares me palpably in the face, the church door remains open. Yes, the church



door during this interval of but some twenty seconds of time, had remained wide open, and now closed noiselessly as of itself even while I continued to gaze. But was there then a second man in the church? Who could shut the door? Was that old pile frequented by robbers? This was a tangible danger, a horrible idea, situated as I was in that vile lone house; this I say came home to me. Robbers, and if so, murderers; crime and solitude and mystery linked hand in hand. My heart beat audibly, and louder and yet louder. If they were robbers was I safe, alone and unprotected? Was I quite sure I had fastened the outer door below? But why should I be singled out? The maddest thoughts flashed across my brain, and suddenly my heart beat to all but suffocation,—I distinctly heard the tramp of a heavy foot coming up the stair.

I had no weapon of defence, should the visit be one of violence or blood. I grasped the chair-back convulsively with my hands, and transfixed to the spot abode the result. The feelings of that moment, man could hardly endure twice and yet live. At ordinary times I am not the least superstitious—NOW, I am not ashamed to confess, my thoughts were upon old Geoffrey, the miser, without his brains. The agony of suspense was maddening, the heavy foot-tramp was at the door. I drew myself up, self-manned as well as I might be, on the instant. "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust," murmured my quivering lips.

The door suddenly flew open, a man stood on the threshold—he gravely advanced, and placed himself before me. A century of time seemed to pass in one moment; but that one moment so far reassured me, that the horrible state of mental torture just endured was partially calmed down. I felt wonderfully supported from within, and enabled to

confront my mysterious visitor, with something approaching to self-possession.

To the last hour of my life never can I forget one single trait of the majestic and grand figure I now looked on, lighted up with a brilliant light which streamed into the room, and pervaded its darkest niches with the golden lustre of brightness, almost resembling that of the meridian sun. Such was the dignified majesty of the intruder, I could have knelt and adored. It seemed as if the old days had returned, when the children of heaven walked upon earth, and mixed familiarly with the sons and daughters of men. I might perhaps illustrate my feeble description by simply comparing THE MAN to one of Titian's glorious cavalier portraits just stepped out of its frame. Tall and majestic of presence, with high and commanding look, every action, every gesture, every motion, was that of proud acknowledged authority, but of authority tempered by love and kindness, softness and benevolence. The man or angel (*demon* I felt he was not) appeared to be about forty years of age. He wore neither beard, whisker, nor moustache, but long auburn ringlets of hair streamed d-wn his back, such as a fond woman might well love to caress. His eyes were dark as the raven's wing, and seemed to search, with their penetrating glances, into the very marrow of my bones. A purple cloak of velvet hung from his shoulder, half-covering a black velvet antique tight fitting dress. His hands were covered with gloves of buff leather, with ruffles of point lace; and a capacious point lace collar fell over his cloak. The whole of his dress and accoutrements were fresh and bright, as if but now newly donned. Without regular armour, a short sword was dependent at his side; his heavy boots bore the golden spurs of a knight. The velvet

*flopping* hat and large ostrich plume of white feathers completed almost the exact simile of that portrait of Manuel de Gondoza, by Murillo, which I once saw in the Spanish King's gallery at Madrid. It is almost unnecessary to say that these various, and it may be thought trifling peculiarities, were rather gathered together by my astonished senses during the coming hours of this dread visitation than at this my first view; for indeed, even now, partially calmed as were my perturbed senses, my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth, and the hair of my head to stand up like that of Job, when in the night, a Spirit of the Lord passed before him. My awful visitor smiled, and his smile chased away partially terror from my mind, as the early rays of the sun drive off the mists from the mountain top. He spoke, and his words fell with pleasing distinctness on my sense of hearing. His voice was deep, clear, and low, resembling the melody of running waters, or the humming of bees in a flowery vale.

"Peace be upon thee," murmured THE MAN, with another benign smile of assurance of safety—"the peace of the Lord God be on thee and around thee—for verily His ways are wonderful, and His providence inscrutable. Peace be on thee and on thine, and fear me not, O Alfred Graham, for I come but to beg a boon—easy of granting to thee—but to me the most precious pearl ever dropped by the grace of God to satisfy the hungry and yearning soul—crying out in her long, long desolation."

For my life I could not understand the meaning of these mysterious words. What could he want of me? and how did he know my name was Alfred Graham?

I muttered something, I know not what in reply, and THE MAN repeated something like the same words. Fear

is, I believe, chiefly made up of surprise. All soldiers feel inclined to run away the first battle, as Murat turned his back *once* to the Turks in Egypt. I found, that although he looked upon me, I lived, and THE MAN'S courteous demeanor could not be misinterpreted. I could have knelt down and worshipped him, but I no longer feared him.

“What would you with me, dread form—man or angel—say? Why comest thou here?” The audible sound of my own voice completed my full restoration to self-possession.

The noble cavalier glanced round the room, and in the light of the brilliant halo which continued to fill up all surrounding space, his eyes fell with a look of especial meaning on my chess board and chess men.

“You, Alfred Graham,” said he, “are a chess player—a chess enthusiast—strong in the game, as earnest for its practice and advancement. I too, am, or was, a zealous chess player, one rarely, if ever, conquered in my day. Know in me Sir Bertrand de Kendale, renowned in the battle, the tourney, and the courtly hall. Know me, moreover I repeat, at the present moment, as a suppliant to thee to beg the deepest act of grace—the kindest favour ever bestowed by man on man. *Wilt thou play a game of chess with me?*”

And with a graceful air of lofty smiling courtesy, Sir Bertrand signed me, with uplifted arm, to approach the table, deliberately taking a chair by the fire, seating himself, and proceeding to arrange the pieces, as comfortable and as much at home, apparently, as though we had been in the London Chess Club. I followed his example mechanically, for the very name of chess was, to me, the

sound of the trumpet to the battle field—the shoutings of the strife to the war horse. I seated myself *en regle*, moving, though, like one in a dreamy state of semi-consciousness, as well indeed I might—the whole thing being so sudden—so unlooked for—so extravagant to my apprehensions—so opposed to all pre-resolved opinions of spiritual and corporeal essence. The common vulgar ghost of a novel can be imagined; but here was a man seemingly as much in the flesh as myself, requiring a chair to sit down upon, acting in his frame upon the laws of sound and motion exactly as I did—his boots creaking on the floor—his plumes waving a solid substance in the wind—his grasp encircling the chess pieces. The whole presented a problem which, to solve, would have required powers not human. I did a wiser thing than to reason at all about the matter, for I put my chess men in battle array, though I cannot deny but that there even yet existed a curious feeling of flutter about my heart, which I tried hard to swallow down.

“Will you play chess with me?” repeated Sir Bertrand, with his ineffable smile. “I will!” cried I boldly, and with pleasure.” (God bless that third tumbler of punch, I wish I had its sister here!—this thought was *en passant*.) “I will play with you, be you what you may, if you will swear by the great God, you come to me in His name, and intend me no harm!” “In God’s name indeed do I come,” answered he, “and this do I swear; nor can aught of harm happen to thee, although thou art mysteriously marked out to be the instrument of my redemption—to snatch me as a brand from the fire.”

“Then play away!” cried I. All doubt was dismissed, and my heart beat high with hopes of conquest. To

overcome a man is something, but (argued I internally) to conquer this stately knight, come he from where he may, would be indeed a laurel for my brow. I say I felt no fear now. Set a veteran chess player before a board, and he cares neither for fiend nor fairy. I felt additional comfort, as I saw the wondrous light with which we were illuminated, had neither ghost-blue tinge nor scent of brimstone, and glancing downward upon Sir Bertrand's comely limbs and glittering spurs, felt reasonably assured no cloven foot could dwell so gaily attired. Puerile as are these reflections, they really crossed the mirror of my mind. Man is a thing compounded of great and little—of soul ethereal, and flesh corruptible—of diamonds and mud. Every lofty thought of man's mind is coupled closely in connection with some puerile trifle. But I am getting into a Victor Hugo line of meditation, and so let us on.

Our game of chess commenced in solemn silence. I seemed thus inclined to "let well alone," not anxious to enter into conversation, upon the same principle which would prevent one's speaking to a lion if shut up in the same cage, and bewildered still at finding oneself in safety. Three or four moves on each side were thus played, of a routine description, my eyes dwelling sedulously on the board. Why do I dwell upon these petty details? I know not, anymore than I know why I repeat my adventure at all. My pen seems to move under other guidance than my own, and I must write down all which presents itself. Sir Bertrand evidently knew the openings of chess. Our debut was the *Giuoco Piano*. Wishing presently to castle, my courteous opponent, to my momentary surprise, placed his king on rook's square, and seated the rook on the monarch's vacated throne. This mode of castling

would have broken up my position presently. It was not to be permitted. If we are playing chess, its rules must be maintained, by powers celestial or terrestrial.

"That mode of castling is not now practised," said I quietly, but firmly. "It is the Italian rule, but *nous avons changé tout cela*, and the license has been restricted in England and France 200 years, to Greco's plan, termed now, by our learned, the Calabrian method; permit me"—and so saying I replaced his pieces, and shewed him how we castle.

"And is that really the only shape in which it is now permitted to castle?" asked Sir Bertrand, in a sort of surprise, as it seemed at least to me.

"It is, Sir Knight," replied I.—"Such is even indeed our law, and playing in England you will, I presume, conform to the rules of the country." "Certainly," rejoined my antagonist, "I cannot object, though unprepared for the change. One positive and regulated plan of castling, universally adopted, presents, I own, its advantages. In my time we could castle in a dozen different modes."

"And when was your time, if I may ask '*sans indiscretion*,'" said I, boldly. Truth to tell, THE MAN-ANGEL spoke so blandly, and smiled in so fascinating a manner, that I resolved, if he were even the great lord of darkness himself, to be strong in my "rights of man." It may well be asked whether there are not now on earth, beings as strong everyway as those of Hades. This "*en philosophie*," however.

"My time!" answered Sir Bertrand mournfully, looking around the room: "yon oaken-carved chimney—once so fresh and bright—was built at my command. What date bears it?"

I arose, and pored upon the old wood, till I made out the date of 1584, grimly carved on its blackened beams. I resumed my seat.

"Fifteen hundred, eighty and four!" continued my visitor—"two hundred and fifty years! and I still on earth, with the curse of my crime upon me! My time! It was indeed a time—but soon I bless God to cease, and resolve into eternity."

If he were the devil, thought I, he would not bless God, but yet he speaks of crime. He replied to my unsaid reflection.—"Fear me not, I again say, O lover of chess—I am no malign or evil spirit, but a most miserable sinner, left on earth to expiate a most awful crime. Oh! indeed, ought I now to be prostrate at thy knees, bathing thy feet with tears for God's unutterable mercies, now vouchsafed to me, through thee, his special agent."

"But what sin did you commit?" asked I. "What crime could you have worked on earth to bring upon you these things?"

"Of that hereafter, my friend," said he with a deep sigh, as if his heart were breaking. "Of that hereafter. Dread was my crime, and dread its punishment. But oh! how beautiful she was?"

"Who was so beautiful?" cried I. Man is a being so disgustingly curious!

"Question me not, at least not now. Play out our game."

I was quite impatient with curiosity to penetrate this mystery further. How sweet must have been the apple Eve took from the serpent! All the beauties of the sixteenth century that I had ever read of, with Mary Stuart at their head, were floating in my imagination. Which could



it have been? thought I. I repressed my enquiring spirit for the moment, resolved to watch a more favourable opportunity to put a few questions. Reverting then to the chess game, I simply asked—

“And how like you our mode of castling?—Some of our chief players think it would be better to revert to the Italian method, and abandon the standard of Greco.”

“Both ways, friend,” said he, “have their own peculiar advantages. In the fruits it yields, your plan is probably even the more attacking, since the irresistible force of our ancient form, placed the acceptance of the gambit out of the question, restricting our game almost wholly to the *Giuoco Piano*, to the exclusion of the tens of hundreds of brilliant debuts, I at once see must arise from limiting the license of castling to the Calabrian method. When I played with Paolo Boi”——

“He has played with Paolo Boi!”

“When I played with Paolo Boi,” continued the gallant knight, unheeding my interruption, “on the memorable occasion of his visiting my good lord and patron, the Earl of Northumberland, in whose castle halls I was then the favourite page, he played nothing but the gambit, chivalrously maintaining that assault against players of every country, and even against the famed Leonardo, in their great match, celebrated, as you know, by Salvio, of Naples. Of a truth had this new plan of castling been then in vogue, the Syracusan champion had added fresh weight to a blade, the sharpest, as it was, of all I ever felt or faced in chess. Be satisfied ye players of the present time, to castle as ye now do. Had your plan not been considered an improvement, it could hardly have superseded our antique fashion. But play on friend Alfred, for my soul

wearies of this dim mortality, and pants to be resolved into its own bright ethereal essence. Play on then."

So we continued our game, and whether it was that he treated the school of the moderns with that contempt in which old men so unjustly at times hold young men, or whether it was to be attributed to his skill having a little rusted from being out of practice, (two hundred and fifty years *font des vacances diablement longues !*), I certainly got him fixed, presently, in a position of considerable difficulty, and worked hard for the honour of England, to impress my opponent with a favourable notion of the chess powers of her sons. My temples glowed, my brain throbbed with excitement, and with the anticipation of meriting the car of the triumphant. Suddenly the scene shifted. Sir Bertrand carved out a splendid sort of coup, turning on several forced changes, atrociously difficult to calculate in their results; and a perfect equality of position was restored. Both of us now seemed alike interested in the fray. We played slowly, and studied the varying kaleidoscope hues of the game analytically and intensely. I was perfectly carried away with the feelings of excitement, engendered by the mysterious features of the visit, and resolutely persisted (I hope it will be allowed to my credit) in abstracting my thoughts from all but the board before me, enabling myself thereby to give my whole skill and energies to the game. I treated my opponent now, in short, as though he had been one "of the club."

Writing subsequently as an old chess player, and a determined lover of truth in chess (which should ever be the game of truth), I must declare, on retrospection, that the stranger's play was remarkably fine, his game being quite in the high style of Labourdonnais or Macdonnell, as to

invention in the improvement of incipient attack, and resource under heavy pressure. Even as I played, I thought of the story of Tartini playing the fiddle with the Devil in a dream, and writing down such snatches of the Sonata, as he could recollect when awakened ; and I, who was not in a dream, resolved at least to note down the various moves and phases of the eventful game I was conducting. Alas ! vain are indeed the hopes of man. The whole game faded subsequent to its finish, from my memory, like the panorama of a beautiful mountain country, growing dim and more dim as the sun descends in the west, until quite obscured and devoured by the black shadows of night. I know we played the "Giuoco piano," and saving the fact of my being conquered, that is all I know about the matter. But in declaring Sir Bertrand to be the conqueror, I partially anticipate—the common fault of all sanguine minds.

Yes, I lost the game. For an hour did I fight it out with the very pertinacity of an English bull dog ; but at the expiration of that time, I was fain to bow philosophically to my fate, and pass under the Caudine forks of the conquering army. My defence had been gallant, though unsuccessful. The game was lost, but honour remained. I omit much of the interesting conversation which graced the play of my noble opponent. In truth a great portion of it faded away from my recollection, as did the moves of the game. One thing I shall never forget. I was checkmated. "You play a very strong game of chess," said Sir Bertrand. "May chess never cost you what it has cost me. May you have strength to rule your enthusiasm for this bewitching game, so that it lead you neither to crime, nor to enervating indolence—the mother of crime. Meanwhile

the blessings of a burdened soul be on thee for ever, both through time and eternity. Joy, joy to me—the spell is broken—I am ransomed from my captivity, and earth gives place to Heaven. Adela—dear Adela—to thee I come—in those blest and shining regions, where thou hast long since been received an angel of purity and light.”

Sir Bertrand pressed his hands on his forehead, for all the world just as mortal man would have done. I momentarily expected the roof of the room would open, and that expanding some gorgeous cherub pair of golden wings, he would at once rise to the habitations of the blessed. Curiosity burned in my heart, and I could not restrain speaking.

“But,” said I, “in what can a creature like me have served thee? In what may humble man minister to him whose very presence denotes the immortal?” I spoke earnestly and wishfully. The stranger hesitated as he answered, and his words fell in broken syllables.

“Man,” solemnly said he, “Man may not presume to pry into the counsels of the eternal—to seek to fathom the ways of Him who is the end and the beginning—who rides on the whirlwind—and wields the storm-fire. Between you and me is the great gulph—death. Who but myself has been permitted to re-cross its waters? Two hundred and fifty long years have seen me an exile from my home—a dweller in the rocks—working out in silent resignation, a doom whose end I knew not. Now do I indeed recognise that the first of virtues is resignation, and an humble bending of the rebellious knee to the divine will of God. Happy, thrice happy am I in at length being permitted to attain the distant goal—the blessed land of immortal peace, and happy, ever happy be thou, Alfred my redeemer, in

having been appointed to be the light to lighten my darkness—the regenerator of my wondrous destiny.”

At this moment, the heavy bell of York Minster tolled the hour of three, and the sadness of my heart increased at the idea that my now sainted visitor was about to leave me, as it seemed, his existence unaccounted for—his mysterious coming unexplained. Again I say, that man is a most enquiring animal. I made a desperate effort, and spoke boldly out.

“Spirit of air—denizen of earth—Sir Bertrand, or whatever name thou bearest, tarry yet the speaking of a single word. I am in darkness, and would fain be enlightened. A mighty mystery has been presented to me; is it altogether unnatural that I should wish to unfold its mazes? Bear then with the infirmity of my human nature, and deal tenderly with this, my weakness. Once, if not now, thou too wert in the flesh, and brother should sympathize with brother. Before the throne of God all are equal. Thou avowest, thankfully, a sense of deep obligation, wherefore I, in my blindness, know not, and yet thou would'st leave me for life a prey to the speculative amazement growing out of this wondrous visit. And thou too wert once a child of Adam also! Is this mystery not unjust? May not the craving soul be satisfied? Art thou forbidden to be clear in thy speech? Speak, O speak, I adjure thee by the Lord of the hill and the cloud—by the Maker of the earth and its waters. Who and what art thou? Whither dost thou come? and wherefore dost thou go? Speak! I beg—I implore thee!”

Very earnest and impassioned was this my speech. In truth, I felt that I had a moral right to slake my thirst upon this occasion, at the fountain—acquired through being,

in however inexplicable a manner, the party avowedly conferring an obligation, though what obligation there could be in playing a game of chess was a riddle, which to solve would have puzzled Ædipus himself!

Sir Bertrand's heavenly smile played across his face. He had arisen from his chair, but now reseated himself. His fine features were lighted up with the kindly spirit of one far above man—though it might be a little lower than the angels. His words fell upon my eager senses like the softest zephyrs of the west,—playing on a summer's eve, amid the orange groves of Italy.

"Of a truth," said he, "thou puttest but a fair query, and though it cause me to stay yet a while longer upon this hated earth, I feel I may not reasonably baulk the frank questioning of the spirit that burns within thee. Something will I then say relative to the past—to my own past life, though I can but trace its outline, for it is forbidden me to do more. On the future I am silent, for the future is sealed unto all the children of earth, by the especial will of their creator. Listen, Alfred Graham, to a passage of the fortunes and life of Sir Bertrand de Kendale, and may'st thou profit by what thou hearest!

"Attached, as a page, to the fortunes of the gallant Lord of Northumberland, my early life flowed on like one long happy dream. Parentage, descent, kith, kin, and estate, are foreign now to my history; but never came there to Britain a strain of more lofty Norman blood to rule it over the Saxon churls of the land, than that which flowed in the veins of the ancestors of Bertrand de Kendale. But all this is vanity. My ambition was to make myself a name; to write my title on the rolls of fame; to live to posterity as the gallant Norman chief; to exist through

all time, as something that had really been. Here on earth, then, my heaven was the tourney, the battle-field, the chamber of study, the bower of the banquet, the hall of song, for there—*there*—did I breathe the same balmy air as the beauteous Adela, my noble patron's daughter. Why did we love? Why did we meet? Were we to blame, if our kindred souls recognised in each other the heavenly particle sought from all eternity? I may say this now. Well, we loved in all the strong love of that brave olden time. As page and squire my probation passed, and in a well stricken field of war in Spain the golden spurs of knighthood were buckled on my heels by my own dear Lord. For a moment—a brief moment—it seemed as if fate was removing those barriers of rank and condition which sundered Adela and Bertrand. Vain delusion! On this I dwell not. Merit and talent can stop the torrent of the ocean, and tear the craggy rock from its granite base; but they seek in vain to overleap the conventional barriers of puny man, in what he terms his social system. Black night fell upon our sunshine — confidence was broken—jealous meddlers came around us—we were betrayed—and torn for ever from me, my Adela was immured for life, here, in the Convent of Santa Dominica,—compelled in a half-maddened state to pronounce those vows, and assume that veil, which made her indeed the blessed bride of Christ, but which severed our loves for ever. At least so it seemed. Tortures tore my brain. I sought to die, but could not. Far—far away, in other lands, beneath the sun-burnt banners of Arragon and Allemaine, did I seek on many a battle-field the death elsewhere denied me. But in vain. I had that within, which would not let me die. A sudden resolution came

over me. I could no longer contend with my destiny. I flung down my sword and returned to England, taking up my abode in this very house here in York, in which we now meet. Why did I make it my dwelling? Ah! thy heart doubtless anticipates my reply—from this very chamber could I, and did I—gaze, day after day, and night after night, upon the shrine of my worship—the casket that held my pearl so priceless—the convent towers of Santa Dominica. Why did I this? Oh! ask the waves why, century after century, they beat on the rugged rocks, as if to win them to their embrace, and age after age failing, yet do those waves beat on! Years passed thus, and if not happy, I was content, or at least outwardly so. Within was the never-dying worm; but outwardly, the world saw but the gallant bearing of the renowned Sir Bertrand. None but the burning spirit of my soul was in possession of my secret. I bided patiently my time. My sole aim was but to clasp for a moment my adored Adela to my burning breast—and then, with her, to die in one embrace. Years, I say, passed thus. My Adela now was Lady Abbess, by virtue of her broad lands and noble kin, but nothing I heard of her having thus won rank and sanctity could make me doubt her constancy. The faith of true love—of love like mine—is vast as ocean. I felt that on earth the Abbess of Santa Dominica was but a blighted and most sorrowing wreck. I may not dwell on these souvenirs. With exalted rank, the holy Abbess had acquired the liberty which waits on power. We interchanged a look—nay, a scroll. Our plan was formed, and disguised as a learned Doctor of Laws, in an evil hour, I gained access to the convent, under pretence of teaching the noble Abbess the game of chess, as a pastime to wile away her idle hours. The leech of



the convent was blinded by my Adela, and declared similar earned recreation to be essential to the lady's health. We met—in that word how much is expressed. My visits were daily, during long periods of several consecutive hours. Our secret was well kept. To the world around, we were the sainted abbess and the erudite chess professor; to each other, we were Adela and Bertrand. Why need I dwell on this? She was now the spouse of Heaven, but had not her prior troth been plighted to me? And was she not my bride by every moral tie? Enough. I taught her chess, indeed—but I taught her also something else—I taught her love—passionate, burning, earthly love. Oh! this was heavy sin! Mother of God pray for me!—but so it was, foul was our crime—but soon followed its punishment. Let not vain weak man presume to think he can mock at Heaven with impunity. The flock of Christ had lost its virgin lamb, but the wolf within the sheep-fold might not flee away unscathed. No thought indeed had I of flight. My sole thought was of Adela! Time passed—the hour of retribution struck. A prying Bishop, on a visitation, discovered our secret. How, or when, I knew not. The blood of that proud priest streamed over my sword; but all was unfolded, and my revenge was worse than useless. Our crime was known—was published to all. The very demons of hell might have had mercy on the innocence of my Adela—but man is worse than the fiend, for he knows no mercy to his fellow. The synod met, the magnates of the land sate in judgment. Sentenced to be buried alive, bodily, with my Adela, within four cold stone walls—dark, narrow, and massive—there to die miserably of famine. Did I blench, craven-like, from my fate, and bow the knee for mercy? No! I believed that the judgments of Heaven

might not altogether resemble those of men, and I laughed my judges to scorn. The demon of pride hardened my heart, and I gloried in sharing aught that might be the portion and punishment of my beloved Adela. When the slow rising stones had encircled us, and utter darkness reigned round and about—when the last expiring sounds of the workmens' hammers conveyed to us the adieus of earth, still, heart to heart, did we enfold each other, and the death agony which finally ensued after long, long, hours of suffering, too hideous to anatomize, for us brought but the one piercing pang, that at last ONE had come with real power to sunder us. A voice within bids me here be silent. After death comes judgment—but God judges not as man. I may not—I dare not—I will not—dilate too freely on these mysteries, for mortal man could not hear and live. Pardon—free, glorious, pardon—was my Maker's merciful boon to Adela; who rose at once from her shroud of clay and stone, to dwell for ever a seraph in the realms of light. For me, alas! my hand was red with the heart's blood of the bishop—a hard man it might be—but a sworn servant of the church, and one of its annointed rulers. Thou shalt not kill,—that awful mandate of the Mountain Sinai had been violated, and poorly might the excuses of mortal frailty avail in self-defence. But oh! the mercies of God, how light are his chastenings compared with our deserts. That doom I then thought so fearful, I see now was indeed light benignant. Hard, very hard, was I, in the pride of worldly knowledge, and fitting was it that my soul should be purged of its vanity, ere it could wear the mantle of heaven's humility, and be qualified for more glorious aspirings. Chess, especially, had been my means of crime—chess was justly made my punishment. Sentenced was I to tarry on

earth, unseen of man, until some inhabitant of this very house (the house in which I had myself dwelt, and formed my plans to estrange a nun from her vows) should play a game of chess here with me. Then should my penance be consummated, my salvation achieved, my crime expiated. This blessed event has finally come to pass. The sun of righteousness has risen, with healing on his wings; and the storms of darkness are for ever dispersed. Year after year, century after century, have passed away in my pining solitude, and fain was I to believe my weird would endure for ever. Still was I blind to the adorable ways and wisdom of Providence. But my heart was softened; and my sole meditations were of prayer and supplication to him who dwelleth on the throne of thrones. My time was spent within the narrow walls of yonder church, unseen of men, but viewed doubtless by him before whose piercing ken a sparrow may not fall to the ground unnoted. No chess players resided in York, few came there for even an hour's visit. Of those who came, none crossed this lowly antique dwelling. Still I prayed on, still I besought forgiveness. The tempter sought to thrust into my brain doubts of the mercy and wisdom of the infinite; but I drove him back to his darksome caves with scorn. At length my prayers are heard—at length is the fullness of time come. Thou, Alfred Graham, hast played with me the long appointed chess game, and I am an immortal spirit, shedding blessings on chess, and on thee, to the remotest hour of time."

Sir Bertrand was silent. I cannot express my thoughts. But I seemed urged to speak in my folly, and speak I did accordingly. During the whole of his prolix narrative, strange as it may seem, one thought had been paramount, and thought now expressed itself in words.

"But, Sir Knight," said I, "after all, you have not paid so very dearly, considering that you obtained the object of your wishes. Methinks that fair abbess of yours was well worth——"

"Silence!" interrupted Sir Bertrand, somewhat sternly. "Silence, weak ignorant man, dare not to pry into mysteries beyond thy comprehension. Be our interview of this night borne in upon thy mind, to be ever present as a warning, a beacon, an example. And now, for the last time, farewell! farewell—earth fades—Heaven opens! Adela, I come!"—

\* \* \* \* \*

Even as Sir Bertrand de Kendale uttered these last words, an extraordinary change came, as it seemed, over my sight. The noble form of the stately cavalier appeared slowly to die away, and melt like mist. The divine light, at the same time, with which his figure had been as it were clothed, faded imperceptibly into dimness, and darkness, and solitude. I was alone, and the decayed embers of my fire hardly betrayed by a few solitary sparks that they, too, had not quite departed. I was alone, but my heart was full. I could not believe my mysterious visitor had really quitted my presence, until some little time after, when the crowing cock gave the signal of morn on his shrill clarion, and then I knew that I was yet of earth. The recollection of the past remained, never to be effaced. My narrative has been but a sketch. To write down all, were now I feel impossible. Perhaps I have already said too much.

\* \* \* \* \*

Morning dawned upon York, and found me in the same meditative posture I had assumed on the disappearance of my chess antagonist, corporeal or etherial—which of the two classes properly claimed Sir Bertrand, never could I, and

never can I, satisfy my mind. The rays of a brilliant sun now lighted up my little room into positive cheerfulness. Had I the means I would buy that house, repair it, and inhabit it, in spite of old Geoffrey without his brains. Many of my readers love doubtless to be minute. I tell them then, that, on inspection, I found my room door locked, exactly as I had secured it the night before, and saw that the outer portal of entrance was likewise fast, as I had made it. The chess men remained in the position of checkmate, and I could give the situation of the pieces, but not recollecting the previous moves, such presentment could hardly prove anything.

I breakfasted at the Green Swan, and then paid a visit to the church of Santa Dominica, now known in York as the church of Saint James. A latent, lingering hope occupied me, that I might find some mouldering remains of the living tomb of the lovers—Bertrand and Adela, but I found none. The church itself exists still, and the low portal from which I saw the figure emerge. These and the humble tenement in which I had slept present themselves to the enquirer, as so many proofs of the truth of my tale. Many legends rest upon slighter grounds. I paid mine host of the Green Swan his bill, and left York on my way south.

I have told my story. Was it worth recording? Perhaps not. From the hard-hearted worldling it will meet with scorn and unbelief. So I should wish—I write for the generous, the enthusiastic of soul. I have found it a difficult task to force myself to permit the world at large to share in so deeply solemn—so holy a confidence. I build up no theories. I have told my tale in the plain words of truth; but I do not pretend to account for anything. A

romance writer might have woven this adventure into a volume ; but I am not a romance writer. I did certainly hope to have gathered together, subsequently, from my reminiscences a chess-paper or two, from the vast store of chess narrative which fell from Sir Bertrand, relative to the players of the middle ages ; but it is decreed there shall be no “renaissance,” through my humble means, of these glorious old chess times. I cannot account for it ; but as the form of Sir Bertrand dissolved away into thin air, many of his words melted from my recollections with him. *C'est dommage*. Rousseau heard Lucifer play some delicious music in his sleep (Lucifer or Raphael I forget which), and on awaking, was able to write down that sweet melody, known ever since as “Rousseau’s dream.” I was not asleep, but am hardly so fortunate as Rousseau. Perhaps the tale of true love I heard, drove wholly from my mind the chess conversation. I am tender-hearted, and most deeply sympathize with the beautiful abbess. To build up two lovers—and two *such* lovers—alive, within the four narrow walls of a marble tomb, is dealing to them (to say the least of it) very *cold* and *hard* measure.

I have told my tale. One word remains to be added. I am prepared to face the scepticism of the age. On narrating this adventure to a friend in London a few days after its occurrence, he had the unblushing impudence to laugh at the whole, as a delusion—a dream—a something I know not what of phantasy, inspired (the fellow added) by the third tumbler of punch, which said punch he pronounced to have been doubtless the real spirit of the night. My friend even carried his absurd incredulity to the point of supposing that the third tumbler might have begotten a

fourth, swallowed by me unconsciously. To this tirade I disdained reply. I shall never speak again to so prejudiced a person. Our friendship is broken for ever. Nothing can shake my faith. Galileo (or some other "Leo") was tortured for proclaiming the fact that the earth moved round the sun. When released from the rack, he exclaimed—" *still* the earth moves!"

*London, November 1842.*

## CHESS, WITHOUT THE CHESS-BOARD.

(From "*Fraser's Magazine*," March, 1840.)

---

THE art of playing chess without seeing the board, or men, has hitherto received less attention, as a branch of our fascinating science, than from its difficulties of acquirement it would appear to deserve. The thing has been talked of, and read of, and sung of, and chronicled on the golden tablets headed with the name of Philidor; but is only known, even now, to the multitude, as a dream. Those who can do it, say but little about it; those who cannot do it, protest "such mountebank tricks are below the notice of a gentleman." I really once heard these very words used in a chess-club, by a man who on most matters displays a fairish share of sense. But though sneering at every thing is a pretty sure mark of a weak head, yet, as the world goes, your sneerer plays the safe game; there being ever so huge a band of fellow-clowns around him, to echo back his slight and shallow jest. Whether the power of conducting a chess-game without seeing board or men be worth acquiring or not, the singular faculty in question is at least worth cooking, if the pot can be made boil, into



a dish of pleasant gossip ; and I here accordingly present my chess-brethren with such gleanings anent the subject, as my pen has been able to scrape together. My lamented chess-friend, the late Alexander M'Donnell (too early taken from us), who excelled in this, as in every other department of chess, was accustomed jokingly to say, that " the only things which spoilt chess were the board and men." Let me see, during this sitting, whether I can make any converts to so novel a species of doctrine.

To exaggerate the difficulties attendant on playing chess well, in the usual manner, is hardly possible. Of the thousands and thousands who learn the moves, how few arrive at the high pitch of excellence ! The truth seems to be, that chess depends on something approaching to an exclusive faculty, or particular organization of the mental powers, more than it does upon general sense and capacity. I am acquainted with persons who have played chess, and studied chess, and written chess, and read chess, unremittingly, weekly, daily, and almost hourly, during twenty or thirty years—men of great and varied powers of mind—good engineers, skilful mathematicians, able logicians ; but even as they took the odds of the rook from a first-rate player in the beginning, so must they do still ! The point to which their chess faculty originally led them being once gained, there they must be content to remain, and make the best of it, like true philosophers. Other amateurs, in the course of a few months, acquire, comparatively speaking, an extraordinary degree of insight into the mystery ; and though heavy, even unto stupidity, in every other pursuit, are keenly brilliant over the chess-board. Napoleon, Tamerlane, and the madcap Charles of Sweden ; Richelieu, Voltaire, and Jean Jacques Rousseau ; Franklin, Burke,

Wollaston, and many other men of mark, whose names are flashing across my recollection, all played chess, and played it badly. On the other hand, the fact that good chess-players are not necessarily talented men, generally speaking, rests upon evidence bright as sun-light; since names could be quoted, not only from among those who have been, but those who yet are, the vessels of whose brains bore, and do bear, much more lead than quicksilver.

I maintain, then, the existence of what in the political jargon of the day is termed the "finality" doctrine or principle, as applicable to chess students; not meaning, in so doing, to deny the assistance to be derived by minds of a certain bent, from studying the game in its theory. I am happy to find myself supported here by Mr. Richard Penn, from whose able *Maxims and Hints for a Chess-Player* I cannot resist quoting a couple of paragraphs:—

"Most of the persons (says Mr. Penn) who occasionally play at chess, know little more than the moves, and a few of the general rules of the game. Of those who have had more practice, some have acquired a partial insight into the endless variety of the combinations which may be formed, and their beautiful intricacy. A few play moderately well, but the number of good players is very small. It would, however, be difficult to find any one, who, after having played a few hundred games, would not think it an imputation on his good sense to be considered a very bad player; and this is the universal feeling, although it is well known that men of the highest attainments have studied chess without success; and that the most celebrated players have not always been men of distinguished talents.

\* \* \* \* \*

"He who, after much practice with fine players, remains long in the middle class, becomes at last convinced by 'time and ill-success, that there is a point which he cannot pass. *Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum.*' He is obliged to confess his incurable inferiority

to players of the higher order; and he must be content with easy victories over a large majority of those whom he meets with in society."

The doctrine of the "finality point" in chess-players is in no wise contradicted, upon reflection, by the certainty that the majority of its students, however well-disposed towards the science by nature, may increase that aptitude by studying good works on the subject; as well as by practising, as much as possible, with their superiors in knowledge of the craft. Exceptions to this rather confirm, than mar, the rule.

In a sketch of the life and doings of the renowned Deschapelles, which appeared recently in this magazine, it is stated, on his own personal warranty, that he acquired chess in a few days. Whether this be true to the letter, or not, that great player assured me himself that such was the fact, and that he had never read a book at that time on the subject. It is certain that, in an incredibly short space of time, he distanced all his competitors in the race; and seated himself on that throne which he occupied for fifteen years. An example of extraordinary progress in chess occurred some twenty years back, when a Mr. Williams, in six or eight months, from merely knowing the moves, became a really first-rate player; the arena of his combats being the Antigallican Coffee-house, and I believe also the London Chess Club, then meeting at Tom's. Both M. Deschapelles and Mr. Williams were, I admit, of high powers of genius and talent in every other respect as well as chess.

A firm believer in the doctrines of phrenology, as taught by Combe and Spurzheim, I am of opinion we should here look, after all, for a solution of the apparent anomalies just

stated. There must exist a certain predisposition for the acquirement of chess, and similar forms of calculation, call it what you will; and such organ, it follows, must be endowed, according to the individual, with greater or lesser faculties of development. From my own observation, I fancy, that to have the power of playing chess very skilfully, the organs of number and order must be proportionately expanded. Music springs from the same source, and accordingly chess-players and musicians will be ever found intimately mingled. Philidor was a composer of music; and in our own time we find both of these arts cultivated by the same persons, to a considerable extent. Messrs. Nixon, Slous, Dizi, Lewis, Bone, Griffin, Latour, Troupenas, and fifty others I could quote, are equally accomplished as musicians and chess-players. The organs laid down by Combe, *number* and *order*, were largely developed in the head of Philidor; as may be seen in Bartolozzi's engraving, as well as Gainsborough's portrait, and Mr. Scipio Clint's clever bust of the great Frenchman. The same conformation of brow is visible in M. Deschappelles. In playing chess with a stranger I have sometimes amused myself by comparing his style of game with the superficial observation I have been enabled to make by glancing at his craniological presentment. I know men who, possessing high sugar-loaf shaped heads, piercing conically the air in a point, like the Peak of Teneriffe, will, thanks to this preternatural possession of the bump of "firmness" or of "obstinacy," contest the game, long after hope would have ceased to draw breath in the frames of their fellow mortals. I have seen players thus constituted, put forth as much firmness as ever did Regulus in his rat-trap. Piece after piece is taken away, pawn after pawn melts beside them;

you have the queen and a couple of rooks, while their unhappy king reigns alone in the majestic dignity of misfortune : but never did Caius Marius in the bulrushes shew greater philosophy than does that isolated monarch. Your dinner is waiting, and you say so—the opera has commenced, and your cabriolet waits to waft you thitherwards—you give broad hints that your opponent should resign, but he will not hear of ransom ; he still takes his half hour to each move, and when the tedious checkmate is finally given, congratulates himself on having played out the play of Leonidas in the straits of Thermopylæ. He has the bump of “firmness,” and visits you with its bitter fruits as well as its perfumed blossoms ! Another class of amateurs I have the honour to be acquainted with, who, by way of distinction, may be called, but not invidiously, the “flat headed ;” each cranium of this species being depressed at its apex, constituting a species of table-land like that whereon stands Mexico. Men thus formed, are marked through life as waverers. They hesitate, and doubt, and waver, and philosophize, and dream away existence like most true gentlemen. Get them into the slightest scrape at chess, and they reel instantanely ; win a pawn, they sweat blood and water ; capture a knight, and they give up the game. To the credit of the fair sex I must add, that of lady chess-players, by far the majority display the organ of—I dare not say “obstinacy,” but may write “tenacity of purpose.”

But a lecture on phrenology were here out of place, and so let the science be no further disturbed at present by so unworthy a disciple as myself. The same organ, or faculty, which conduces to skill in chess, equally applies to the perfect attainment of kindred subjects of study. Good

chess-players play all games of society better than other people, speaking wholesale; and to their honour be it said, they seldom permit their talent to prostitute itself to the baser objects of gambling. Chess-players take up whist, draughts, and similar pursuits; but rarely number themselves among Mammon's votaries who crowd the race-course or "Halls of Eblis." The muscular sports of cricket and archery would hardly appear to be adapted to the sedentary habits of chess amateurs: yet their muster-roll bears the names of many of my fellow chess-players: the high places being here assigned to Messrs. Harry Wilson, Cadman, and the lamented Brand. In dismissing my allusion to the doctrines of the great and good Combe, I must add that, except in the case of a phenomenon, a chess-player favourably marked by nature for preferment must still expend the same time upon his object which it costs to attain rank as a linguist, a mathematician, or a surgeon. My friend, Harry Wilson, once gave De la Bourdonnais the knight; Philidor took odds of Legalle; and M'Donnell, Cochrane, St. Amant, and a host of others, worked their way slowly up to the summit through the one narrow path of thorn and briar, envy and hatred, which Genius must ever tread under its heel, as the king's ship runs down the pirate.

If the difficulties, then, attendant on acquiring skill in chess are so great, when playing in the usual manner, with unlimited time at command to expend in surveying the forces on the field before us, in how vast a degree must these difficulties be multiplied, when the mechanical objects of chess-men and chess-board are abstracted, and no longer exist, save in the powers of the mind; when the windows of the brain are closed down, and the faculties of sight

hermetically sealed ; when a bare idea alone remains, and all abroad is darkest night ; when all that is left of the chess-board and men is their vague and timid shadow, wandering, spectrelike, across the mental chamber, like objects on a camera obscura ; when memory, and the perceptive faculties of the brain must be taxed, unaided, to name the position of every piece, pawn and square of the chequer. And when these efforts of the reasoning and thinking powers require to be uninterruptedly prolonged and sustained, during a period, possibly, of several consecutive hours, without the slightest relief, break, pause, rest, or relaxation ; THEN, I say, the art of playing chess without seeing the board, becomes, fairly considered, an extraordinary effort of the human mind ; and one which must be allowed to be, in the eyes of the metaphysician, equally curious as interesting. I do not, of course, mean these remarks to be applied to him who performs the task in question in less than a first-rate manner. Fourth-form players may acquire the power of thus going through a game, somehow. This, like the parent sport, has its various stages of excellence. The player who receives a rook from his master, and can play a game blindfold, within a rook of his own proper strength, is no phenomenon. Such practitioners are to be found, plentiful as berries on the bush ; at least, I know that it has been my fortune to meet with several of this class. To such players I shall address a few words personally, anon ; at present my business lies with their betters. The art of playing chess without seeing the board is an exhibition not to be tolerated beyond the family circle, save when performed by a first-rate player, in a first-rate manner ; that is to say, within a pawn, or so, of his actual strength when looking over the pieces.

Philidor played blindfold up to this point, as I shall presently shew; and De la Bourdonnais did the same, ere smitten by the protracted illness under which that great artist yet unhappily labours.

The difficulties of what we may term "chess proper" have been glanced at; and the increased labour considered, attendant upon its acquirement as a *purely* mental exercise. With the board and men it is hard to learn; *without* the board and men, proportionably harder: and this brings me legitimately to a climax. By what name shall we designate the power of *playing several games at once*, BLINDFOLD? I leave my readers to solve the question, while I pass on to sketch forth the doings of the ancients, anent the general matter and subject of this essay. Let us call up the shades of the departed, and contrast their achievements with those of our present chivalry.

From the earliest period of time connected with the existence of chess, its history commemorates artists capable of conducting a game without the auxiliaries of board or men. The first fairly authenticated instance occurs as far back as the year 970 after Christ; when we learn that a Greek named Joseph Tchelebi, who had travelled through India, Persia, and various other countries, played a match at chess, blindfold, in the Syrian city of Tripoli. The performance of the feat, on this occasion, could hardly, however, be termed orthodox, the player's eyes being merely bandaged, while he was permitted freely to handle the board and pieces; the chessmen being fashioned purposely for the occasion, of a size unusually large. The curiosity of the exhibition was hereby materially lessened, although partly kept up by the fine play of Tchelebi. Be it understood, I do not aim here at giving a complete catalogue of



blindfold players. That the practice was not uncommon in the East, that fragrant garden and nursery of the earth, from a very remote period of time, appears from the writings of Sokeiker, an early Arabian historian, who quotes several examples of the fact, and even records the names of certain learned Arabs endowed with the faculty in question.

In the year 1266, a famous Saracen player, hight Buzacca, visited Florence; and then and there, in the palace of Count Popoli, and in the presence of numerous persons of distinction, courtly chiefs, gallant squires, and fair dames, undertook the chivalrous enterprise of conducting three games of chess at once, against three of the best players of the day, selected for their superior skill to keep the lists for the honour of Italy against him. Two of these games were played by Buzacca without seeing the positions; the third going on at the same time, over the board, in the ordinary manner. The gallant Saracen carried off the laurel of the tournament, winning two games, and drawing the third; to the astonishment and admiration of the beholders. As Italy was renowned both then, as subsequently, for skilful chess-players, the victor on this occasion must indeed have been a noble fellow, and a worthy countryman of the knightly Saladin. Chess-players always play to win; and, so far from wishing to make Buzacca's performance a mere labour of love, the best chess heroes that could be mustered were doubtless entered against the conquering son of Mahomet. At this time we know that many of the sciences were in a high state of cultivation among the Saracens; as music, medicine, and astronomy. That chess originally came into Europe from the East, during the first crusades, is almost matter of certainty; the steel-clad savages of the semi-frozen North

acquiring that, as well as other arts and refinements, during their many murderous and blood-drinking irruptions into the lands of the nightingale, the myrtle, and the rose.

It may be here remarked, without going out of my way unhandsomely to breathe on the well-won wreath of the Saracenic champion Buzecca, that to play three games in the manner he performed the feat, that is to say, looking over the board in the ordinary mode, during one of the three, and conducting the other two parties simultaneously from memory alone, is much less difficult than to play the two blindfold and leave out the third altogether. For the practised player, having a chess-board and men before him, whatever be the position of the pieces, can, with comparatively light labour abstract them mentally from the board, and replace them with the situation in which he is called upon to move. Unlimited time is at command, and should there arise the slightest difficulty as to the relative positions of any of the chess-men, the artist will clear away the mist, by recapitulating the moves from the very commencement of the game. And so, once more, *en avant*.

Carrera, in his scarce work on chess, printed in 1617, at Militello in Sicily, chronicles the names and qualities of several men, excelling in his own time as blindfold players. Among these are Mangiolini of Florence, and Zerone, Medrano, and Ruy Lopez, of Spain. The last of these was the celebrated chess-professor of the Spanish court, who actually received a bishopric at the hands of King Philip, in reward of his chess-playing talent. May there never have been, and may there never be, a bishopric bestowed on even lighter grounds of desert! Ruy Lopez wrote an elaborate treatise on chess, now become extremely

rare, but fails to dwell on his own ability as a blindfold player. I note the fact, because modesty of this description is so very scarce a commodity. Carrera likewise speaks of Leonardo da Cutri, surnamed *Il Puttino*, and Paolo Boi, as both being pre-eminently distinguished for their exercise of the peculiar talent now under our consideration; and informs us in general terms, that the Turks in Hungary were accustomed to play chess together by memory while riding on horseback. This reminds me of our English chess professor, Sarratt, and the celebrated young French player, Hypolite de Bourblanc, who were accustomed, in the beginning of the present century, to play chess almost daily together in this manner, while strolling in the pleasant meadows then skirting the north of London. Upon these occasions, if the positions became too entangled for satisfactory solution on the spot, the game was adjourned, until their return home afforded them the assistance of a chess-board. M. de Bourblanc could hardly find his equal here, except in the person of Mr. Sarratt, the first English player of his day; and would have probably struck a blow at the supremacy of Deschapelles himself, had fate spared his life a few more years. De Bourblanc was unfortunately drowned at sea, on a voyage to the Mauritius.

Paolo Boi, of Syracuse, the renowned contemporary of Leonardo and Ruy Lopez, and certainly one of the greatest players earth ever saw, was in the habit of playing three games at once, without seeing either of the boards; conversing merrily all the time on different subjects. Paolo Boi died about the close of the sixteenth century. An interesting sketch of his life appears both in Carrera and Salvio, and it is indeed, to me, highly doubtful whether there ever existed his superior in skill. We are told that

Paolo Boi left some writings on chess, but they have never been traced to light, and have doubtless long since share the doom of so many precious manuscripts devoured by stern time. The King of Spain was one of the patrons of Paolo Boi, and offered to make him a bishop as he had already done Ruy Lopez. The Syracusan replied laconically, that he would prefer holding a commission in the lay, to the spiritual army of Spain; and was accordingly indulged in his choice. Paolo Boi fought many battles, on sterner fields than that of chess, and died at a great age. He had the honour of playing chess with several crowned heads, including the romantic Don Sebastian of Portugal; and was the conqueror and master of every chess-player of his day, excepting Leonardo of Cutri. Dr. Salvio accordingly proclaims Paolo Boi and Leonardo to be the "light and glory of chess." Paolo Boi fairly defeated Ruy Lopez, as did also Leonardo, and the two heroes played themselves a match which lasted three whole days consecutively. In this great struggle for supreme dominion, the king's gambit was the opening agreed upon; Paolo Boi playing the attack each game, and Leonardo taking and maintaining the gambit pawn. During the two first days, each champion won the same number of games; on the third day, the majority was gained by Leonardo, but Salvio acknowledges that the Syracusan on that day was indisposed in health. The two rivals never played again. I own that, far from coinciding in opinion with Salvio, who gives the first place on fame's roll to Leonardo, I am inclined to believe the Syracusan would have gained the day, had the contest lasted longer, and under more favourable circumstances. 'The king's gambit is a game lost by its nature, and I should say, that he who played

the attack, decidedly gives the odds of about half a pawn. Paolo Boi was moreover indisposed in health during one third of the play, which must have told heavily against him. In comparing the style of the two players, we read that Paolo played with great rapidity, while Leonardo was slow and cautious. There was certainly no third player of the time able to cope with either of these paladins. Leonardo, as well as Salvio, Alonzo, Cortega, and other contemporary players, could play chess well without seeing the board. Dr. Salvio's scarce work on chess, includes a very curious biographical memoir of his brother amateurs, which Sarratt omitted in his barbarously mutilated translation. Both Paolo Boi and Leonardo travelled literally sea and land, Alexander-like, in quest of new worlds to conquer. Italy and Spain, Sicily and Turkey, lay prostrate at their feet; and the very Moors of Tunis paid them tribute. It is quite delightful to trace the wanderings and adventures of these "*preux chevaliers*," who appear to have vowed and paid the same chivalrous devotion to chess, which the knightly warriors of Dante and Ariosto did to the star-eyed queens of their enthusiastic idolatry.

Keysler, the historian of Turin, informs us that Girolamo Saccheri, a priest of the order of Jesuits, who lived in the beginning of the last century, could play three games of chess simultaneously, without seeing either of the boards; and Verci in his *Letters on Chess*, adds, that the Padre Saccheri could even play four games in this manner with perfect lucidity of intellect, seldom committing even the most trivial error. It is to be regretted that there was neither a *Bell's Life in London*, nor a *Fraser's Magazine* in those dark days, to record a minute of these amazing

manifestations of chess talent. Saccheri was the Philidor of his circle, and a man gifted generally with extraordinary calculative powers. He was of an intellect so wonderfully precocious, that, before he was ten years old, he could solve the most difficult problems in algebra and arithmetic, and was subsequently constituted public lecturer on mathematics at Pavia. The phrenological organ of number must have been a prominent feature in the cranium of Saccheri; would the order of Jesuits could furnish us in the London Chess Club, just now, with a few acolytes of the same description!

The history of chess furnishes no data from which I can gather any account as to the capabilities of those members of the Italian school of chess who succeeded Saccheri, as to blindfold playing. The golden age of chess at this period descended upon Italy, and there stamped the science with the glorious names of Ponziani, Ercole del Rio (the anonymous Modenese), Taruffi, Lolli, Scipione del Grottoni, Il Beneventano, Il Casertano, and innumerable others. Italy! sunny Italy! once garden of the arts, whether for poetry, painting, sculpture, music, or chess! dost thou in these latter days merely slumber for a brief period, or will the sacred fire never re-enkindle thy magic soil? Does the sun of chess no longer shine upon thy land, or dost thou yet contain players, unknown to fame, but capable of striking a good blow in the *melée*, in honour of thy by-gone empire? Alas for Italy! alas for the sacred land! priest-bound and soul-fettered, she lies prostrate and subdued—too much exhausted now, even to groan. Fireworks and fiddling lord it over the City of the Hills; while Austrian cannon, with ever-burning quick-match, gape like tigers crouching for prey in the chief places of Venice and of Milan.

And here let me remark, that the faculty of playing without a view of the board is not common alike to all chess-players. Careless observers might suppose that he who plays best in the usual manner, when from his post of observation he bodily overlooks the skirmishings in the field, would equally, by his nature, be the most skilful general with darkened eyes; but experience teaches us that such is not the fact. It would almost seem that the power of playing blindfold is an additional organ grafted upon certain chess intellects, but not common to all practitioners. It is a lower deep in the deeps. Many of the best players can only conduct a game a dozen moves without seeing; while others to whom the head class could give the knight, can carry out the party quite to its final termination blindfold. Boncourt, St. Amant, Szen, and other great players of my acquaintance, as well English as foreign, cannot play without looking over the board; neither could Deschapelles. I find that those who can the readiest perform blindfold are such as have studied much from books. The theory thus scanned, fixes the board and its elaborate varieties of position firmer on the mind abstracted from the reality, than when the degree of proficiency attained is derived from practice alone. Men accustomed to solve chess problems, as check-mates in six or eight moves, get a habit of playing openings mentally, and sometimes even whole games; as in the case of Philidor, who first discovered that he could play without seeing the board, from having acquired a habit of practising imaginary games quite through, in bed at night.

But while I state it as my opinion, that players who have studied much from books are most calculated to become proficient when practising without seeing the board, I am far from asserting that they play better in the ordinary

manner, except in the mass, than those amateurs who have acquired their skill altogether from practice. Deschapelles, St. Amant, Boncourt, and La Bourdonnais never looked into books—at least, until they had already taken their places among the brighter stars of Caissa's constellation. Philidor glanced but casually over the writings of those who had gone before him, and deprecated resting too much on book knowledge. The same opinion is held by Ponziani, who thinks brilliant games—such as those of Greco—are to be commended, as storing the fancy with strong and lively ideas; but not to be depended on, to the neglect of practice. I can mark in play the difference in the style of those amateurs whose knowledge is wholly practical, as contrasted with the bearing of such as have studied much the numerous chess authors who have written on the science. The latter play the openings and endings of the games best; but the former have the strongest power of looking through a crowded position. In the course of two or three games I had the pleasure of playing last winter, in Paris, with M. Boncourt, the Nestor of the French camp, and of looking over his play in general, I could but remark that he played the ending of the game in a style very inferior to the middle part; and I believe M. Boncourt never looked at a chess-book in his life. Deficient as to the routine of the openings, never did I see more vigour of perception than he displayed in situations of cramp and crowded difficulty. Players exclusively practical, of high standing, have their ideas more concentrated, their powers of calculation more vigorous, than those of the class termed, by way of distinction, “book-players.” The latter I have known not unfrequently to study away their brilliancy of imagination, and attenuate and tame down their chess faculty, in the



## CHESS, WITHOUT THE CHESS-BOARD.

drudgery of too much theoretical analysis. Their minds wander over the board, and see things darkly, as through a mist. They have been accustomed to finger the men when playing alone from books, and hence are apt to forget that experimental philosophy in chess is a thing forbidden in actual play. Book-players can solve a checkmate in eight or ten moves, perhaps, without touching the pieces; but then they are told beforehand that the thing can be done,—that it is “on the cards.” If the same position were placed before them as a game, and they were asked to play it out, the case might be found widely different. Theorists, too, acquire over-much confidence in their own powers. They sit down with a stranger, who lets them form a splendid attacking opening, and displays ignorance of the densest description as to the routine defence. The “book-player” feels assured of victory, and is already meditating how to give mate in the most astounding manner; when his practised opponent, by some hard opposing thrust, some skilful counter-attack, breaks from the meshes, and not only tears the flimsy web to atoms, but checkmates so rudely, that the astonished student is all abroad. True, he has the consolation left of assuring his friends that he had won a game, but let it slip through *by one bad move*. Chess-players, in fact, seldom lose a game at all, save by this species of chance; as is remarked, with so much point, in those hard-hitting aphorisms of my chess-friend, Mr. Penn, to which I have already alluded.

Is it to be inferred from these observations that I deprecate altogether the aid of those ingenious and clever treatises on chess, by which certain sages have attempted to illumine the art? I hope not. I mean but to point out the evils of a system carried to the extreme; I intend but to

warn the tyro, lest in the day of battle he find his helm to be any thing but armour of proof,—the shield rather of Mambrino than of Achilles. The late Mr. M'Donnell was a book-player ; and when has England shewn his equal ? Book-men or board-men, each class is capable of producing first-rates ; should that genial fire glow within their breasts, without which all systems alike must fail ? Chess-amateurs who study chiefly from books are mostly persons who, fettered by business engagements through life, of one sort or another, have not leisure to play in the club, or the drawing-room, so often as they could wish ; and thus wisely remedy their want of opportunities of practice, by trimming the quiet midnight lamp in their own far away and solitary watch-towers. What man dwelling beyond the sacred pale—be he poet, statesman, or philosopher—can imagine the delight with which the tyro works out, unaided and alone, the solution of one of those enchanting problems of Ponziani ? thinking all the while, it may be, in the unsophisticated candour of an innocent heart, that he himself is destined to be the Ponziani, the chess-luminary of the nineteenth century ! To quote my own experience (fairly allowable in this age of egotism) I candidly own that some such were very nearly my own feelings when first I took up chess ; when, having literally no one to contend with, I groped out my own path in the labyrinth of shadows, and heroically played through every treatise extant. Experience opened my eyes, and has taught me at least to know my place as a chess-player, and to walk humbly accordingly ; and this I write in the simple sincerity of truth. By the aid of books alone, never having played fifty games in my life, I certainly was enabled to pass the mysterious confines of **THE ROOK**—that lofty boundary of

the holy soil ; but I sometimes doubt at the present time, whether I should not have gone farther, in the long run, had I studied less. This is not meant as a paradox. Common sense must indicate that no player can be above stooping to avail himself of the assistance of the best works on chess, at least as to the openings of the games, and certain terminations, made up of given bodies of force, and presenting matter capable of mathematical demonstration. To review games actually played must also be of service ; and clever problems frequently serve to wile away an idle hour. In a word, chess theory is like wine,—its use is good, its abuse is alone to be deprecated.

When, in the beginning of this paper, I eulogize the art of playing chess without seeing the board, never let it be forgotten that I mean it must be skilfully performed. To be well done, as the bard says, it must be done quickly ; and, moreover, within the odds of a pawn, or thereabouts, of first-rate play ; or otherwise it can but serve to dazzle the gaping multitude. The thing must be properly carried out in a double sense of the word,—well done *per se*, and performed by an advanced practitioner. It is otherwise the rope-dancer of the fair, compared with Taglioni ; it is Alexander the Coppersmith, but it is most assuredly not Alexander the Great. Lo ! even as I write, the mighty shade of Philidor rushes from his rest, and I bow down to earth before the majesty of his presence ! Philidor, the greatest chess-player who ever lived ! the founder of a school which has proved itself second to none,—the head of a dynasty which has included a Carlier, a Bernard, a Deschapelles, and a De la Bourdonnais ! O spirit of Philidor ! where is the chess-player with heart so cold as not to vibrate with enthusiastic veneration at the sound of thy honoured name ?

To dwell here on the almost preternatural chess faculty of Philidor is not my intention. The leading features of his prowess must be already indelibly imprinted on the minds of all I care to address as chess-players. His name is not written in water on the iron tablet of time. That he played at intervals repeated matches of chess, consisting of several different games at once, conducted without seeing either of the boards, in the presence of a large circle of admiring spectators,—that he contested these games, not with beginners, nor mere members of the crowd, but with the greatest players his contemporaries could furnish,—that he invariably performed his Herculean labours with the nicest degree of accuracy, conversing meantime smilingly, on various subjects, and rarely pausing more than half a minute on one move, even in situations the most profoundly complicated;—that he could do all this is, I say, enhanced in wonder *tenfold*, when we find he could do it so near his actual strength in the game,—when we learn that Philidor could play blindfold within one poor pawn of his mighty force. Yes, it is recorded as undisputed matter of fact, that with the few players capable of defending themselves over the board, receiving the pawn of Philidor, that great man could make even games blindfold, allowing no odds.

The greater part of Philidor's life was passed in London, where, during his era, he shone like the meridian sun—the lesser planets of chess revolving around him. He created and maintained a high school of chess, playing daily in the metropolitan club of the time with the first amateurs of "*la belle science*." To these men, the patrons of chess, Philidor's skill furnished never-ending matter of delight. They were many of them great, and noble, and wealthy; and yet were proud to kneel lowly at his footstool, to gather

the crumbs of science as they fell from his table. What did these men do in return for Philidor ? for their pet—their chess pastor and master—their idol—their demigod ? What did they in his behalf, when the desolation of many years was upon him, and the heavy hand of sickness pressed on his aged frame ? Alas ! for England ! the mighty and the rich suffered Philidor to die, if not in actual need of life's necessities, at least without those comforts which gold can supply, to soothe down the harsh asperities of utter destitution ! Philidor died almost literally in a garret. During his last hours, he was chiefly indebted for support to the assiduities of one kind friend ; and he passed from life in such obscurity, that I have never yet been able to discover the spot where he was buried. The grave of Philidor is Europe. No marble trophy has been reared to his memory, but his name lives in our hearts. France has a Pantheon, dedicated “ *aux grands hommes*,” by “ *la patrie reconnaissante* ;” would I could see a statue of Philidor placed proudly in a niche of that glorious temple.

In the year 1814 there was published, in Bombay, an original work on chess, by a native of India, well known throughout the British dominions in Hindostan as a player and teacher of the game. The book was originally written in the Sanscrit tongue, but was printed in English, under the direction of the author, by the title *Essays on Chess*, and is prefaced by a goodly list of subscribers, both British and native. This volume is now exceedingly rare ; many of its positions are exquisitely beautiful, and, in fact, of first-rate merit and science. Mr. Lewis reprinted the greater part of the work in England, under the title of *Oriental Chess* ; for which favour, I have been told, the author was not particularly grateful. The name of this gifted

Hindoo was Trevangadacharya Shastru. I have quoted him in this essay, because he was celebrated for playing well without seeing the board. A friend of mine has seen him play three, and even four games at once, blindfold, with the best players,—performing his laborious task with perfect accuracy. He would attend European residents for a certain fee ; and would play eight, ten, and twelve hours at a sitting,—taking no refreshment but a little rice or tea, and seldom opening his lips to utter a single word. He played indifferently the English or Hindoo variety of chess ; and never, it is affirmed, was beaten by any European. Whether he was to be got at when Mr. Cochrane went to India, some years later, I have never heard. If living, I presume our countryman would eagerly have encountered him. Mr. Cochrane is himself quite a first-rate player, as his treatise testifies ; and can also play well without seeing the board. It was hoped Mr. Cochrane would have settled the disputed point, as to the superior talent of the Hindoo players ; but he has sent no publication to England on the subject.\* The most contradictory reports exist ; and it is clear the truth of the matter can only be settled by a European chess amateur of first-rate strength in the game. I cannot here resist the temptation of introducing the Hindoo's preface to his work, as a bit of Oriental prose equally cogent and amusing. Thus runs it :—

“ The generous Mr. Warden, who holds an exalted place under the Bombay government, and whose fame is spread in his own country, and in foreign lands, sitting one day in his beautiful dwelling, along

\* Mr. Cochrane has since visited England ; and many long and pleasant hours have we battled it together. He is now again resident in Calcutta—1850.

with his consort, thus addressed the brave Major William Cowper, his old and intimate companion, who is adorned with every virtue, and merits the praises of all great men :—‘ My dear friend, thou who art of a placid and noble disposition, who hast an acute mind, who art skilful in all matters, and possessed of an excellent understanding, procure a new treatise on chess, which may afford amusement to all, and may be valued by the great and learned ; to be written in verse by Trevangadacharya, of the village of Tirputty, near Madras, who is patronised by his highness the Peshwa, is deeply skilled in the science of chess, and a proficient in the Sanscrit language, and who has lately come here, being the friend of your brother.’ Agreeable to the wish expressed by Mr. Warden, and to the urgent request of Major Cowper, I, Trevangadacharya, who know the principles of the science, have drawn out this treatise, called *Vilas Muni Munjuri*, or the diamond flower-bud of amusement. Its sixty-four leaves, four long petals,\* sixteen peduncles, sixteen fruits, are invaluable diamonds ; and it grows in a bed of precious stones. The illustrious Mr. Warden will, in the first place, receive into his hands this flower bud, adorned with one hundred brilliant diamonds ; Major Cowper, who possesses every quality, will estimate their value ; the ingenious Captain Cowper, whose dignity is advancing, will judge of the manner in which they are set ; and let Mr. Remington, who is mild, wealthy, and celebrated in many countries, distribute this production among his numerous friends, and extend its fame throughout the world. Let the intelligent Major Harris receive delight from it,—he whose disposition is cheerful, and who, by his own contributions, and those of his friends, has brought my wishes to a conclusion,† and may every discerning Englishman, who veils the errors of a work of genius, and behold only its beauties, make use of this treatise ; and, particularly, that youthful amateur, Mr. T. G. Gardiner, whose acute and intelligent

\* The petals, peduncles, &c., denote the sections of the volume ; while the “ hundred brilliant diamonds ” signify the hundred critical situations. The early part of the work is devoted to whole games played in the Hindoo manner.

† The author here alludes to the subscriptions of names for copies of his volume.

mind promises to expand itself, as one of the brightest diamonds in the flower-bud of amusement : nor must I omit to mention that other man of chess, the celebrated Mr. W. A. Morgan, whose beneficent countenance bespeaks a disposition well calculated to bear his victorious trophies in the game with diffidence and moderation."

Respecting such chess-players of my own standing, as play without seeing the board, a few words remain to be said. I have not aimed at giving a complete list of such as have possessed this talent, either now or in time past. I sketch at all times hastily, and the crayon suits me better than the stilet. There are, doubtless, many players of the present day who possess the faculty whereon I at this moment scribble, both here and abroad, in different degrees of excellence. One, now taken from us, I may not name in the same paragraph with any other; need I add that I allude to the lost and lamented Mr. Alexander M'Donnell?

Mr. M'Donnell was, in my opinion, the best player to whom Great Britain ever gave birth; and this judgment is formed on actual deeds, which, with me, so invariably rank before mere words. Unlike many of those Bobadils who set up for men of name, and rest their reputation either on what they tell you they have done, or could do, if they chose, Mr. M'Donnell convinced you of his skill in one manner alone;—he checkmated you; and if you felt unsatisfied, quietly repeated the operation in the next game; and so on, to your fullest sense of satisfaction. Never did he shrink from a chess-challenge; never did he degrade our immortal science by fighting shy of actual encounter. Mr. M'Donnell would play any man, at any time; there was no dodge, no humbug about reputation, no nonsense about him. He would play you on your own terms. If you gave yourself out as "a great man," he would have



taken the rook without a word, and would then have given you the rook in return, after plucking your daw-feathers till the skin had imbibed the nettle rash. In Mr. M'Donnell's death, chess sustained a heavy blow. He was taken from us in the prime of life, and has not left behind his equal in this country. His premature death I have always thought might be traced to the severity of the mental struggle, constantly in operation, during his long match of the hundred games played with De la Bourdonnais in the Westminster Chess Club. These games were played day by day, and I know that he not unfrequently walked his room the greater part of the intermediate night, in a dreadful state of excitement.

Mr. M'Donnell could play better without seeing the board than any Englishman I have ever known, since he could conduct a game in that manner within a knight of first-rate strength; and could also play two games at once. A slight specimen of his peculiar talent, as a blindfold player, exists in the three games printed in the late Mr. Wm. Greenwood Walker's Collection. These games I myself had the pleasure of seeing played at the Chess Club; and I remarked that Mr. M'Donnell played quicker than when he saw the pieces. He expressed some feeling of annoyance if the bystanders spoke in whispers; but had no objection to conversation being carried on around him in a natural tone of voice. I may add, that I subsequently witnessed his playing several games without looking over the pieces, in private, at my own house, of a higher order of merit than the printed ones to which I refer; but, unfortunately, they were not taken down. We Chess-players little thought our leader was to be so soon taken from us.

Of our present circle of players, several can conduct a game well without seeing the board; among these I may be permitted to name Messrs. Pulling, Bone, and Slous. For myself, I have given it no practice, but experience little difficulty in playing blindfold, within about a rook of my strength. I own I have found it too tedious to be agreeable, personally, and therefore but seldom attempt it. I could bring myself in a month, I believe, at any time, to play within about a knight of my pitch of force, but doubt whether I could make further progress.

Since the days of Philidor, no one has so highly excelled in the art of blindfold playing as M. de la Bourdonnais. It was but within the last two years this gentleman discovered he possessed the faculty in question. He gave the Parisian chess amateurs several opportunities of witnessing his skill thus developed, in public exhibitions, commencing with weak players. With very little practice, De la Bourdonnais brought himself to the top of the tree, and found himself able to play (one game at a time) within a pawn of his strength. This he proved, by publicly playing games with MM. Boncourt, Jouy, Bonfil, &c. He next attempted two games at once, and shewed that he could carry them on, with equal chances of victory, against third-rate players.

M. de la Bourdonnais invariably played with great rapidity, and seemed only annoyed when his adversary or adversaries delayed too long. In a conversation I had with him on the subject, he described his faculty as consisting in the power of actually setting up in his mind the chess-board and pieces, which remained throughout the game palpably visible to his organs of calculation. In this I believe De la Bourdonnais to be singularly gifted, as few blindfold players can frame an abstract representation of a

given position at once, but have to feel for it (as it were) slowly, and bit by bit. La Bourdonnais did not doubt and was warranted in the opinion he expressed, that, with very little more practice, he should be able to play three games at once against the best players, conducting them all within a pawn of his strength, and not seeing either of the three. I regret to add that our hero's constitution broke down in the trial, and an alarming rush of blood to the head brought him, a few months back, suddenly to the very verge of the grave. M. de la Bourdonnais is slightly better (while I write), but still in a state of health to cause his friends constant alarm. The first physicians in Paris have agreed in opinion, that the attack originated from his overstraining the finer vessels of the brain, in the labour of playing blindfold; and have, peremptorily, forbidden his repeating the task, under the penalty of the most fatal consequences being, in such case, the sure attendants upon the experiment.

About two years back, a young man at Versailles, totally blind, gave himself out as playing well without seeing the board. This poor fellow had taught himself chess by fingering the pieces, having been blind from his birth. De la Bourdonnais played some games with him without looking on the board, allowing the youth the advantage of touching the pieces, which were fashioned after a peculiar form; but the "mighty conqueror" of M'Donnell found he could give the young man the odds of a couple of pieces. It must have been a curious sight to witness this Versailles tournament.

I now pass on to a brief consideration of what assistance theory and practice may afford to the amateur desirous of playing chess without looking over the pieces.

Several early writers on chess, as Carrera, Lopez, and

Damian, have left what they term instructions for learners with regard to acquiring the art of conducting a game without seeing it. I find, however, all their advice on this point to be merely superficial; including, as Byron says, much more "*rigmarole*" than "*rhetic*." It must be owned, theory can do but little for the student in this part of the game; constant practice and repeated exercise of the faculty when developed—these are the steam ingredients to send the locomotives swiftly along the line; and in getting opportunities of practice, be it remembered the worse your man plays, the better at first for your purpose, so he be gifted with due patience and admiration of your superior prowess. Herein, playing blindfold differs from ordinary chess; since in the latter you require for improvement the acquaintance of a better practitioner; but in blind play you do not seek to advance your knowledge of the game itself, so directly as the mere acquirement of the faculty in question. Those who have studied chess-books, and solved chess problems largely, have already taken the first step of the initiated. The question is not at this moment with me—Do I advise your learning to play without seeing the board? but it is—Supposing you have formed such determination, what can I suggest toward helping you along the road? Listen, then.

The first piece of advice I give is, always to perform with men of one colour; at least, until tolerably perfect. You will thus have your king and queen, on starting, always in the same relative position; and your adversary cannot prevent this, as you still leave him the choice of pieces; for, supposing you both to be using the white men, it does not affect the game, the moves being described in the usual language of chess notation. Mr. M'Donnell

always used the black men, in his imagination, when playing without seeing the board; but when conducting two games at once in this manner, played them, mentally, with men of different colours to mark a stronger difference in the subsequent positions, through the kings being on different sides of the queens at the commencement of the party. Philidor resorted to the same expedient, and when he played several games at once blindfold, also varied the openings, purposely, as much as possible, in order to keep the parties as distinct as he could do in their consequences. In the few games I occasionally amuse myself by playing without seeing the board, I invariably use, in my mind, the white pieces.

During your noviciate, always claim the first move, which slight act of grace can hardly be refused by a courteous antagonist; and then you are at liberty to make your own opening. Aim at first at always playing the same *début*, subject to the caprice of your adversary. I prefer an attacking sortie, as the Evans' gambit, or the queen's pawn two opening, to a closer game, as being more likely to lead to a free exchange of pieces. Take off the pieces as early as possible consistent with safety, and especially the knights, the movement of these artful cavaliers being extremely difficult to calculate blindfold. Let the friend who is sufficiently kind to offer himself as the victim of your tediousness, give you at first the queen afterwards diminishing the odds. Play without spectators until you have passed the first stage. Of course it is not intended your eyes should be literally blinded, so that you sit with your back to the board. On a cold frosty day, playing blindfold is a good excuse for getting the lion's share of the fire; and with an easy chair, and a foot on

each hob of the grate, American fashion, you cannot be better planted as to the bodily man. You will find it facilitate your calculations to close the eyes occasionally for a time.

Bargain with your friendly enemy that, should you even be really hard up, and too much embarrassed to carry on the game, you may have a cursory peep at the board; or, at least, be permitted to ask certain questions as to the relative position of the men. This is far better than hastily throwing up the task. Of course, when you can perform decently, you will scorn all such adventitious assistance. The method of describing the moves should be such as I have used in my writings on chess. It is not, however, sufficient to say "pawn advances;" but the square should be named from which it moves, as well as that on which it rests, and so of the pieces. Again, should your adversary call "bishop takes knight," you are justified in demanding that the several squares should be named occupied by the pieces in question. After each move is proclaimed, ascertain that it is a legal, not a false move. When pawns are doubled, be sure their march is accurately stated; and recollect that each time a pawn makes a prisoner, it changes its proper name.

It is a good plan to avail yourself at first of the aid of a blank chess-board, which you may place before you, while your opponent conducts his moves at another table. Afterwards you may substitute a printed diagram, two inches, or one inch square, representing the chess-board. This is of immense assistance, and you may subsequently introduce, instead, a drawing of the chess-board, in which the squares are merely ruled, and not shaded black and white. All these helps will be openly set forth, as there must be nothing like trickery or deceit about a chess-player.

Play the first dozen or fifteen moves blindfold (the phrase is useful, though fallacious), and then turn round and finish the game in the ordinary manner; for if you overtask your brain at first, you will soon get disgusted with the study altogether. Set up the king with some pawns in different positions, and try to play out such situations without seeing them. Give the mate of the queen or rook alone, as also that of the two bishops; such endings are purely mathematical, but will furnish you with capital exercises. He must indeed be perfect as a blindfold player, who could give the mate of the bishop and knight in the legitimate number of moves; or could manœuvre the rook and bishop against the rook, so as to force the game, in one of those positions in which victory the superior force is an essential consequence of the situation.

The supposition is erroneous that you must set up a mental representation of the chess-board on which to play. As I have stated, M. de la Bourdonnais can do this: but neither you nor I are M. de la Bourdonnais. The position is generally acquired by a species of intuitive feeling, which shadows forth the representation of the two armies as it were, on the mind; their relative posts being felt for and developed in detail. It is, in short, a something which may be performed, but cannot easily be explained.

When the position is veiled upon your mental organs of view, and doubt comes across you as to the relative places of the men, I can suggest nothing better than your patiently recapitulating all the moves, *de novo*, from the very commencement of the game. Care not being thought slow in the operation, but again I advise you not to ride the hobby till you feel assured he is tolerably safe. Remember Phaëton, and eschew public exhibition prematurely. Flattery is sweet, but so is treacle.

It is not sufficient to be thoroughly impressed with the technical name of every square on the board, but you ought also to be able at once to pronounce whether such square is black or white. Remember that the bottom corner square on your right hand is always white, and from this alone you can trace the colour of any one of the remaining sixty-three squares. You ought, moreover, to know with certainty which of the squares are connected together in right lines, and which in oblique lines; the former being of course, chequered with the two hues in alternate series, the latter being necessarily all of one colour. The exact situation of every piece or pawn on both sides, together with the squares which surround them, and the points open to their action, must equally be borne in mind. Before and after each exchange, examine duly the consequences, and positions of such pieces as will be left on the board. When the men are nearly cleared off, you will find it difficult, though essential, to keep sight of such struggling pawns as may have survived the skirmish. Another point of importance is to keep watch over the consequences of any check your adversary or yourself may be able to give. Suppose your king open to a check at any given point, and your antagonist to delay giving such check, you must not the less calculate its effect each move you play. Castle early, and with the king's rook in preference to its companion.

Certain data may be laid down as to the nature of the pieces in detail, which I proceed to specify, as well worthy the attention of any one wishing to play blindfold.

The king, in the middle of the board, commands eight squares; when placed on either of the four corner houses he commands but three squares; on any other square of



the outside line he governs five squares. Thus he can always play to one of eight, five, or three squares, subject to the position. Of the square on which he stands I say nothing.

The queen, that powerful combination of the rook and bishop, has a range proportionate to her dignity. In the middle of the board she commands twenty-seven squares; in other parts of the field this number diminishes, but you ought to know her capacity of march when seated on any one given square of the sixty-four; what points she commands, and from what quarters she is assailable. Recollect that every piece attacking queen must put itself, in the act of so doing, *en prise* of the Amazon, always excepting the knight. The adverse king cannot approach the queen within the distance of a knight's leap. Change off the queens as early as practicable.

The move of the rook is easier to follow in the mind than the march of the bishop; it being less difficult to operate in right lines than on the diagonals. The power of the rook is unique in this respect, that, place it where you will, it always commands exactly fourteen points of action. The two rooks, as well as the two knights, can support each other, and thus double their force, which the bishops cannot do. At the end of a game, when you have a rook established on the seventh line, and the adverse king is thereby confined to home quarters, do not lightly abandon such a position.

The bishop, in the exact centre of the board, commands thirteen squares. This power gradually diminishes as it approaches the borders; and in the angles, the prelates govern but seven squares. It is necessary to bear in mind, that for every square the bishop is moved, it ascends or descends one rank of squares on the chess-board.

The knight being the most difficult piece to conduct in "the mind's eye," proportionate attention must be paid to its peculiar qualities and capabilities. The two knights reciprocally defend each other, as sworn brethren-at-arms were wont to do in those days of brute rascality and beastly ignorance called "the age of chivalry." On the centre of the arena, the cavalier attacks eight squares; nearer the sides of the board he governs six squares; and commands but two points when seated in either of the four extreme corner houses. Calculate the speediest mode of attacking a given point with the knight from a distance. You will find he can be played to any one square, from any other square of the board, in a number of moves not exceeding six. The knight cannot expend less than two moves to attack a square of a different colour from that on which he stands.

Calculations involving the pawns are difficult, on account of there being so many as sixteen pieces of this sort; all endued with equal powers, and yet such power being of subordinate importance. The comparative insignificance of a pawn frequently causes you to forget its position, when playing blindfold. The pawn, in taking, assumes the move of a bishop; and, therefore, in the act of making a capture, always goes to a square of the same colour as that from which it starts, but equally moves up one rank of the board, as though it simply marched onwards. When merely advancing, the pawn goes on the two colours, black and white alternately; except when played two squares at first starting. None of these points are wholly insignificant.

In conducting a game without looking over the pieces, the attack is easier than the defence; and herein the

science differs from ordinary chess, at which I hold the attack to be learned last. Attacking openings conduce to more earlier exchanges than do close games. Endings of parties are more difficult to manœuvre than openings, there being so many squares unoccupied ; but at the same time they are more mechanical. Do not aim at *too* brilliant a style of play ; and be content to win the queen, rather than lose the game by trying to give checkmate ; a word which must be uttered with fear and trembling, lest the announcement should be premature. Take plenty of time upon all occasions ; and harden your heart against any gossipers who may happen to stand around. You cannot attend to what you are doing, and exchange compliments with them at the same time. Be equally on your guard not to suffer your attention to be distracted by the conversation of the lookers on among each other. It is a difficult thing in chess, at all times, *to look on well*. I have already proclaimed loud talking to be less irritating to a nervous subject than the murmuring buz of many whispers ; since it is so difficult to withstand the temptation of trying to overhear their purport and significance.

I saw an amateur once pretend to play without seeing the board, who looked very frequently, it struck me at his watch, particularly when the situation bothered him. In this watch, I found he had a very minute engraved representation of a blank chess-board. He fancied himself, doubtless, an able tactician ; but I thought him a mere trickster. No unfair means must be resorted to, or the thing becomes contemptible altogether. The aid of a carpet divided into squares, a casement window of many panes, a shepherd's plaid, a chequered riband, a canebacked chair, or even an iron railing, might occasionally help one out, in solving some knotty question as to the power of com-

mand exercised by the knight, or other piece, over particular squares of the board; but I repeat that you must learn to depend on yourself alone, as though your organs of bodily sight were literally bandaged. Should it happen that you have a forced drawn game by a perpetual check, and think you can do better than adopt it, weigh your judgment well before giving up what is always a certain advantage.

I was much gratified, a short time back, at what struck me at first as an extraordinary exhibition of memory on the part of a friend of mine, a distinguished member of the Edinburgh Chess Club. This gentleman seated himself with his back to a blank chess-board, and allowed me to place a knight on any square I chose, telling him, of course, on what square I had fixed it. He then directed the march of the knight over the sixty-three squares alternately, until all were covered; which I ascertained by marking each square with a counter, as the knight was ordered to occupy the post. Begin where you will, this gentleman is never at fault, but directs the moves of the knight in this manner with equal rapidity and facility; performing the feat from his head alone, without reference to any written key or prepared diagram. I was subsequently initiated into the secret, and am now favoured by permission to make it public; which I proceed to do, as a really clever and curious piece of mechanical memory. A difficult enigma, or mathematical problem, is not the less to be esteemed because its solution, when known, appears more simple than expected.

The knight is conducted on a re-entering series of moves, so that the last square on which he settles down is exactly a knight's leap from the square on which he started. De Moivre, Ozanam, and other writers, have given several ex-

amples of the march of the knight upon this principle, any one of which will suit your purpose, so that you always keep to the same. The sixty-four moves thus form a circular chain of sixty-four links; and it is obvious that it must be immaterial with which link you begin, since by keeping on in the proper path, you cannot fail to traverse the chain in its correct order, and come back again to the starting-point. Were the chess-board numbered, it would soon be detected that you always played the knight in one line of march; but otherwise the principle of his course is perfectly hidden. Three, four, or half-a-dozen boards, may thus be placed side by side, and as many knights may be directed to move over their squares at once; each cavalier starting upon a different square. Still the same circular chain is travelled over by each in the same order, though commencing with different links. It remains to be pointed out the manner in which to fix on the mind the sixty-four squares in the order they must be touched; and herein lies the real merit of the arrangement. The sixty-four squares are represented by sixty-four syllables, each syllable answering to a square. These syllables are learned by heart, and convey the names and numbers of the squares to which the knight moves in succession. Other systems might doubtless be framed, fitting for the purpose of fixing these syllables indelibly on the memory; but it would be difficult to find one better adapted to the purpose than that invented by my friend, which is as follows:—

Name the chess-pieces by letters, in alphabetical order, beginning from the right hand of White's original position. Thus king's rook is B; king's knight, D, and so on. The reason for choosing consonants, and totally omitting the vowels, will be seen presently. You will proceed to number the squares of each piece from one to eight; but

instead of saying B one, B three, &c. take such part of the word as will coalesce easily with the letter, and make one syllable of the whole. Thus *un* (for one), *oo*, *ee*, *or*, *iv*, *ix*, *en*, *et*, stand for the eight squares; and the syllables, *bun*, *boo*, *bee*, at once tell you the piece and square as plainly as if you said king's rook's first, second, or third square. The memory is further aided by the letters running in alphabetical order, as B coming before D (C is not used), and D before F, we can never be at a loss as to what piece and letter are designated. A diagram, with sufficient columns filled up for explanation, will here be of assistance:—

					Fet.	Det.	Bet.
					Fen.	Den.	Ben.
					Fix.	Dix.	Bix.
					Fiv.	Div.	Biv.
					For.	Dor.	Bor.
					Fee.	Dee.	Bee.
					Foo.	Doo.	Boo.
					Fun.	Dun.	Bun.
M	L	K	H	G	F	D	B

Now, suppose you begin with the knight placed on king's knight's seventh square, *Den*, you form your circular chain of eight lines, each containing eight syllables; and further to assist the memory, convert the eight syllables of each line into two words of four syllables, so that you have only sixteen words of four syllables to remember; and by something like the Fenagle system, you acquire the order in which these words succeed each other, which will be thus:—

Den—Biv—Dee—Bun .. Foo—Hun—Loo—Mor.  
 Lix—Met—Ken—Get .. Fix—Det—Bix—Dor.  
 Boo—Fun—Hoo—Lun .. Mee—Kor—Miv—Len.  
 Het—Fen—Bet—Dix .. Bor—Doo—Gun—Koo.  
 Mun—Lee—Kun—Moo . Kee—Goo—Dun—Bee.  
 Div—Ben—Fet—Hen .. Let—Mix—Lor—Hee.  
 Kiv—Gor—Hix—Liv .. Men—Ket—Gen—Kix.  
 Giv—Fee—Hor—Gix .. For—Hiv—Gee—Fiv.

I might carry this explanation to greater length, but cannot deem it essential. Space in *Fraser* is a thing of value; so here I quit this very ingenious species of puzzle, and close my essay on the art of playing chess without seeing the board, by a fine specimen of the skill of M. De la Bourdonnais, being a game recently played in the Paris Chess Club by that renowned artist, without seeing the board, against M. Boncourt, the second chess-professor in France, than whom England contains no superior player. Had M. De la Bourdonnais played this game in the ordinary manner over the board, he would probably have gained it; since, at move 37, he would doubtless have seated queen on king's fourth square, in preference to the course adopted; and again, at move 40, would have played queen to her bishop's fifth, instead of advancing pawn.

Game of Chess played in the Paris Chess Club, by MM. De la Bourdonnais and Boncourt; the former having the white pieces, and playing without seeing the board or men.

## WHITE

1. K. P. two.
2. K. Kt. to B. third.
3. K. B. to Q. B. fourth.
4. Q. P. one.
5. Q. Kt. to B. third.
6. Castles.
7. Q. to K. second.
8. K. B. to Q. Kt. third.
9. Q. Kt. to Q. sq.
10. P. takes P.
11. K. B. to Q. B. fourth.
12. Q. retakes B.
13. P. takes P.
14. Q. to K. second.
15. K. Kt. to Q. fourth.
16. Q. Kt. to K. third.
17. Kt. takes Kt.
18. Kt. to K. B. fifth.
19. Q. B. to K. third.
20. Kt. to Q. fourth.
21. K. B. P. two.
22. K. R. P. one.
23. Q. R. to Q.
24. K. B. P. one.
25. Q. B. P. two.
26. P. captures P.
27. Q. B. P. one.
28. B. takes B.
29. R. takes R.
30. B. takes Kt.
31. P. takes P.
32. Q. P. one.
33. Q. P. one.

## BLACK.

1. The same.
2. Q. P. one sq.
3. K. B. P. two.
4. Q. B. P. one.
5. K. B. to K. second.
6. K. Kt. to B. third.
7. Q. Kt. P. two.
8. Q. Kt. P. one.
9. K. B. P. takes P.
10. Q. B. to R. third.
11. B. takes B.
12. Q. P. advances.
13. P. takes P.
14. K. P. advances.
15. Q. to Q. second.
16. Q. Kt. to B. third.
17. Q. retakes Kt.
18. K. B. home.
19. Q. to her second.
20. K. B. to Q. third.
21. Castles, K. R.
22. K. R. P. two.
23. K. B. to Q. B. fourth.
24. Q. R. to K.
25. P. takes *en pass*.
26. Q. R. to K. fourth.
27. B. takes Kt.
28. R. takes P.
29. Q. takes R.
30. Q. captures B.
31. Q. to K. fourth.
32. K. P. one.
33. R. to Q.



## WHITE

- 34. Q. checks.
- 35. R. to Q. fifth.
- 36. K. to R. second.
- 37. Q. to Q. B. fifth.
- 38. Q. takes K. P.
- 39. R. to K. fifth.
- 40. K. Kt. P. one.

## BLACK.

- 34. K. to R. second.
- 35. Q. checks.
- 36. K. Kt. P. one.
- 37. Q. to K. B. third.
- 38. R. to K. B.
- 39. Q. to her third.
- 40. R. to K. B. second.

White loses the pawn, and the result was a *Drawn Game*.

(The author cannot re-peruse this paper in 1850, without noticing the brilliant exhibitions of blindfold chess we have been favoured with latterly by M. M. Harrwitz, and Kieseritzky; who have both carried this branch of chess to its highest point.)

## THE CAFE DE LA REGENCE.

(First published 1840, in "*Fraser's Magazine*.")

"I vowed that I would dedicate my powers  
To thee and thine! Have I not kept the vow?  
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now  
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours  
Each from his voiceless grave; they have, in visioned bowers  
Of studious zeal and love's delight,  
Outwatched with me the envious night."—SHELLEY.

"HYPOLITE!"

"*V' là, Monsieur!*"

"*La carte à payer!*"

And while, as Macheath sings, "the charge is prepared," let us settle the point as to how we shall keep our veins thawed this frosty night. We have dined, and—thanks to Champeaux—have dined well; but where, in phrase of France, shall we "do our digestion?" On a Sunday evening the Paris theatres are mob; to dress for pretty Madame B.'s *soirée*, upon a ten-franc dinner, with the thermometer below freezing point, is north of inviting; while both Valentino and Musard are on the seventh day equally *rococo*. I am a chess-player; and you, my friend, ought to be so too; therefore, put faith in my pilotage. We'll away to the Café de la Régence, and sip our Mocha among Caissa's votaries.

The garçon of Monsieur Champeaux serves his writ, and fingers the cash with a grace worthy of the name he bears.

We are bowed forth. Ugh! How cutting is this north-easter! and how dense the snow-fall! The Place de la Bourse reminds me of an ice-plain in Russia; and the Bourse itself looks like a huge twelfthcake, plastered over with white sugar. The building was modelled after a Greek temple; it is a temple still, the name of its God being merely altered. But it is much too cold to prate philosophy. Like Atalanta, I gather up my drapery, and run for it. Tramp—tramp—we plash through the snow and mud. The streets are desolate, to what this part of Paris generally is at seven o'clock, and the sludge is a foot deep. We gain the Rue Richelieu, bound like rein-deer across the Place du Palais Royale, and first draw breath as we dash headlong into the entrance of the brilliantly illumined *salon* which constitutes the Café de la Régence.

We are in the temple of the THIRTY-TWO; and here indeed chess “rules and reigns without control.” No pen has yet fairly sketched this celebrated *locale*, though many have pretended to trace its lineaments. In that amusing work, *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, Méry pencils the Parisian chess-player, and—the truth shall out—depicts him vilely. Méry has a fluent tongue and a witty brain; but knows no more of chess, practically, than the man in the moon's dog. The historian of *the Café* must have mixed intimately during many years with the first chess artists, past and present, and must play pretty well himself. Let our own right hand crayonise the French chess-men, as they present themselves in the year of grace eighteen-hundred and forty; and pounds to pumpkins we beat Méry out of the field. *Voyons.*

The Café de la Régence, in its outward man, is soon disposed of. Large, low, and in shape resembling a paral-

lelogram of toasted cheese, the very antithesis of the graceful or lovely, our salon presents nothing in its personal appearance which may compete with the glittering café of modern times. Stove-heated to suffocation—gas-lighted to oppression—the blackhole of Calcutta was his eldest sister; though the Régence has mirrors in abundance, and slabs of marble to top its tables. Seven days in the week, from morn till midnight, the crowd pass over its sanded floor, like the waves of the sea on the Brighton beach; the said floor doing double duty on Sundays. Then do the *pekings* and *calicots*—Anglice “snobs”—pour their myriads into the Régence, thicker than ever came suitors to Corinthian Lais. After three or four o'clock on a winter's Sunday, happy is the man who has formed his *partie*; room to place another chess board, even on your knees, being out of the question. All keep their hats on, to save space; and an empty chair is worth a monarch's ransom.

The din of voices shakes the roof as we enter. Can this be chess?—the game of philosophers—the wrestling of the strong-minded—the recreation of pensive solitude—thus practised amid a roar like that of the Regent's Park beast-show at feeding time! Laughter, whistling, singing, screaming, spitting, spouting, and shouting,—tappings, rappings, drummings, and hummings, disport in their glory around us. Have we not made a blunder, and dropped into the asylum of Charenton? Stunned with the riot, we sigh for cotton to stuff our ears; and fight our progress into a far-away corner, in order to recover our bewildered senses. Coffee is brought. We sip, and scan the scene before us; resolving its discordant elements by slow degrees into one vast tableau. Man gets used to every thing

except the toothache. I know a Londoner dwelling next door to a coppersmith, who wakes in the night when the artisans *cease* hammering! So it is with me at the present moment. The noise is bearable, and presently may become even agreeable. Manners are to be noted, and chess-men to be sketched. I mount my hobby, sternly resolving not to ride to-day with a snaffle-bridle. I fear the age is too unpoetical to bear with so much enthusiasm, in application to chess, as my pen ordinarily gives vent to.

The good city of Paris, be it known, holds four thousand cafés; of which the Café Procope, and the Café de la Régence are unquestionably the Adam and Eve. The Régence was established as a rendezvous for the literati of the day, under the government of the Duke of Orleans; and, like Will's in London, became, from its eligible position, the haunt of the most celebrated *esprits* of France during the eighteenth century. Voltaire, the two Rousseaus, the profligate Duc de Richelieu, Marshal Saxe, Chamfort, St. Foix, Benjamin Franklin, Marmontel, Philidor, and Grimm, are but a few of the men of note who constantly frequented the Régence in early times. The very chairs and tables acquired name and fame from classical association; and, till quite recently, the master of the establishment might be heard commanding his attendants, in tones of pride, to "Serve Jean Jacques,"—"Look to Voltaire,"—the identical tables at which this pair of *philosophers* were wont daily to play chess, being still at that time in existence, named from the departed great. These sacred shrines are now superseded by marble slabs; coal-gas sparkles in sun-like lustres; and Voltaire could hardly recognise his favoured lounge, save from the low-ceiled room unaltered in its proportions. A dingy portrait of

Philidor yet hangs, I am glad to see, against the wall. To a chess antiquary, the relic would be worth purchase at its weight in gold.

Custom soon stamped the Café de la Régence as the headquarters of chess, and the uninitiated retired from its walls. It is shocking to see the fane at the present time occasionally desecrated by draughts and dominoes; and had I my will, even the timber-framed journals should be thrown overboard. Chess is chess, and should be preserved intact from grosser material. In the French Ana exist many *mots* levelled at the Régence, in the earlier years of its existence. One of the foremost of these Parisian "Joes" runs, that a certain man was once seen, who spent daily six or seven hours at the Régence for ten years; constantly occupied in poring over the players, but refusing invariably to play himself, and never speaking even a single word. A disputed point arose; the *galerie* was thin, and the taciturn veteran was pressed into the service as umpire. Sorely pushed to decide the question, Monsieur owned that, so far from being a player, he did not even know the moves of the pieces! Astonished at this, the query naturally came; Why, then, waste ten years of life in looking over the board? The reply was, that "he was a married man, and did not care to go home!"

Jean Jacques Rousseau was wont to play daily in the Régence, attired (poor creature!) in a fur cap and flowing Armenian robe; and we read in Grimm's *Letters* that the crowd at last so eagerly pressed around to get a peep at the author of *Emile*, that it was feared the glass of the front would be driven in; the nuisance being only averted by a guard of the city police mounted on the spot matitudinally. During the next generation, the café was

for a time nearly deserted, in consequence of its having become a favoured resort of Robespierre. The lair of the tiger is dangerous, even when he sleeps. Robespierre was passionately fond of chess ; and once, it is reported, granted the life of a young French officer, to a beautiful girl, who came to the Régence, attired in man's clothes, to gain an opportunity of presenting her petition to the tyrant. She checkmated Robespierre, and then frankly revealed her sex, and demanded the life of her lover. She left her chair with a written order for his immediate enlargement, and a passport, by virtue of which the joyful pair passed the French frontier in safety.

What names, what reputations, are identified with chess! And can we blame the enthusiast who loves that which embodies so many historical groupings of the great, emblazoned panoramically upon the mind's perception? Why, as I sit this very evening in the old café, I can picture to myself the shades of the departed called from their rest, and joyfully once more doing battle in chess around me. I can fancy that grand pioneer of the French revolution, the brilliant but infidel Voltaire, sparkling with fancy-flights and ready repartee; pouring forth exultingly the most exuberant conceits, and unbending, over the chess-board, that intellect at which kings and cloisters quailed and trembled. Voltaire's was the good old, coffee-house day of life; when scented perukes, amber vinaigrettes, silver-hilted swords, and clouded canes, made up part of the stock in trade of professional and literary beaux. Voltaire played a match at chess with Frederic of Prussia, and calculated many of his moves in the room where I now ponder. Is that nothing? I can believe I hear the ringing of the courier's spurs as he receives his despatch, and mounts

yonder at the door, to ride post to Berlin. Voltaire was strong in chess, since we know a first-rate could give him but the knight; whilst Rousseau was decidedly inferior in skill. Fancy the two playing together! the witty lord of Ferney confounding his brother sophist with the ingenuity of his "coups," and sending forth St. Preux sulky and check-mated, to write a fresh chapter on the persecutions of the strong. Around, are Holbach, Diderot, Grimm, and D'Alembert, *taking a rise* out of the unsophisticated Swiss; while old Legalle, Philidor's chess-master, looks down upon the group with the supreme indifference of a mere one-ideal, first-rate chess-professor. What cares Legalle for the Encyclopedists?—for Julia or Montmorancy?—his soul is in the heaven of MATE, and all besides to him is vanity. "Philosophers as you are," mutters Legalle, "I should like to play you altogether,—a crown the game."

And giving the camera lucida another screw, lo! we are presented in a twinkling with a fresh group,—the children of the first generation. Citizen Robespierre, in the powder and ruffles he so closely clung to, is playing chess with Fouché, now poor, and of mean repute. Fouché was so wedded to chess, that he is said to have bestowed a place in the customs upon Deschappelles, in return for teaching and practice. In the tableau before me, Citizen Fouché is all smiles and compliments before the great dictator; while the sly, cat-like eye of Robespierre sweeps at each glance both board and hall, to see if the latter hold any one of the denounced,—any heads which are due to Madame la Republique—any job of work for neighbour Samson. "Friends depart;" while the lingerers around subdue their voices, and strain for a smile. Fouché himself shivers in his shoes,



and his fingers shake as they move the pieces. One youth alone meets Robespierre's glance, and quails not. Napoleon, the young lieutenant, is there among the spectators, and like carvings of bronze are his impassible features. Buonaparte at one time played chess at the Régence daily; while waiting, like the sailor whistling for a wind, to get employment from the Directory. The sun of Montebello was yet to rise. I can fancy I see Napoleon before me now; here, seated at the adjoining table, calling, like a soldier of fortune, for his "demi-tasse," but yet giving the order as one having authority, in a tone of voice like trumpets sounding.

Napoleon was a great advocate for chess, which he practised constantly. He was even wont to say, that he frequently struck out new features relative to a campaign, first suggested by the occurrence of certain positions of the pieces on the chess-board. He played chess all his life. In his youth, at college, in manhood, on shipboard, in camp, *en bivouac*. He solaced himself with chess in Egypt, in Russia, in Elba; and, lastly, on that darksome rock which yet contains his bones. It was while captive in St. Helena that the magnificent chess equipage sent to Napoleon as a grateful offering for personal favours, by an English noble family, was refused free passage, because the pieces bore the imperial arms of France. History blushes while she records the disgusting details of this jackass-kick at the dethroned lion. A chess-board on which Buonaparte constantly played at St. Helena is now in possession of the officers of the 91st regiment there in garrison.

As might be anticipated, Napoleon, as a chess-player, was not really of great force. His soul demanded a larger field for the expansion of its faculties. His chess was that

of Marengo, of Austerlitz, of Jena, and of Eylau. Upon our mosaic of sixty-four squares, I could have given him the rook; upon his own board he could afford odds to Julius Cæsar. Buonaparte had no time to make chess a study. He played the openings badly, and was impatient if his adversary dwelt too long upon his move. Every minute of the clock was life to a mind so energetic. In the middle stage of the game, when the skirmish was really complicated of aspect, Napoleon frequently struck out a brilliant *coup*. Under defeat at chess, the great soldier was sore and irritable; although it is presumed that those favourites with whom he played were doubtless far too courtly to carry victory unpleasantly far. Had the scene of battle been the humble, forgotten Régence, and the time twenty years back, the chief might have won fewer games than he did in the Tuileries.

In the thousand-and-one tomes of memoirs printed, relatively to the 'modern Charlemagne—Bourrienne, Marchand, and others, have recorded several anecdotes connecting Napoleon with chess. I shall here introduce one, hitherto inedited, which comes to me direct from M. de la Bourdonnais; who received it, and other curious details upon the subject, verbally, from the Duc de Bassano, Count Merlin, and M. Amedée Jaubert. It is well known, that in Egypt Buonaparte constantly played chess with M. Jaubert; his chief opponents, that way, during the Polish and Russian campaigns, as well as during the armistice of Vienna, previously, in 1809, having been Murat, Berthier, and the Duc de Bassano. It is a fact, that the majority of Napoleon's marshals were chess-players. Eugene de Beauharnois patronized the art; and Murat many times kept the Duc de Bassano planted at the chess-board the

greater part of the night. But now for my Napoleon anecdote, in almost the very words of De la Bourdonnais.

While about to enter upon the famous Polish campaign, the emperor was one day playing chess in the Tuileries with Marshal Berthier, when the Persian ambassador was announced, as requesting an audience. The game was at an interesting crisis, and Napoleon would no more permit it to be suspended, than would Charles of Sweden leave his chess-board, when the Turks commenced battering down his house in Bender. Buonaparte ordered the ambassador to be shewn in, and M. Amedée Jaubert was commanded to the presence as interpreter. The emperor continued his game with Berthier, overwhelming the astounded Persian with questions all the while, in his usual rapid mode of asking to gain information. The Mussulman found it difficult to plant his replies suitably; the various topics being Turkey, Persia, Mohammed, and the Koran; Eastern harems, wives in sacks, the military discipline, and ten thousand other matters. The Persian, however, steered his way like the really skilful diplomatist he was. He exalted Persian institutes to the seventh heaven, or a little higher, and dwelt especially upon the horse-soldiers of Ispahan, as being the finest cavalry in the world. Napoleon good-humouredly disputed the assertion, and interrupted the son of Iraun more than once; but the ambassador constantly returned with his pet cavalry to the charge, and getting warmer by degrees, pronounced his judgment with even more and more decision. "There could be no doubt about it, the foot-soldiers of Europe were excellent—but the Persian horse!"—Napoleon laughed outright as the interpreter rendered the sentences in French; and carelessly addressing Jaubert in reply, said, "Tell him that to-morrow

we'll shew him a little cavalry here." The Persian made his salaam, and quitted the palace. The long contested chess-game was not even then finished. While pondering over the subsequent moves, the emperor found time to issue certain brief orders upon slips of paper, centralizing upon Paris the instant march of various bodies of horse-soldiers from their cantonments in the vicinity. Like the knights on the chess-board, he had them all in his hand. The subject was not again alluded to; the game was played out; but the next morning saw forty thousand French cavalry defile before Napoleon and the Persian envoy, in all the glittering pomp of military decoration. Paris beheld that cavalry almost for the last time. Moscow awaited them:

From Napoleon to Deputy Louvet, the fall is great; but I cannot resist giving a quotation from one of the latter's novels. Louvet was ardently attached to chess, and playfully hits at his brother amateurs in the following passage, put into the mouth of his chief hero:—

"I enter the Café de la Régence, crammed with men deeply engaged in cooking checkmates. Alas! even they had more life about them than I had. I seat myself at a table, and look on; but my irrepressible agitation causes me to walk the floor with hurried and unequal strides. Soon one of the players exclaims with eager tone, 'Check to the king!' '*Grands dieux!*' cries his opponent; 'my queen is forced! the game is gone—and such a game! *uné partie superbe!* Yes, sir, rub your hands,—fancy yourself a Turenne as you will, do you know who you have to thank for the coup? This gentleman—this fool here. My curse upon lovers!' Astonished at the uncourteous manner in which I was apostrophised, I assure the losing player that I did not understand him,—that I had nothing to do with the matter. 'You don't understand me?' replies he. '*Eh, bien;* but see, a check by discovery!' Well, sir, and what have I to do with the

check by discovery?' 'What have you to do with it? Why, sir, for the last hour you've been hovering around us like a vulture, ejaculating all manner of nonsense about your Sophia! your beautiful cousin! I listen to all this trash, and play like a schoolboy. When a man is in love, sir, he does not come to the Café de la Régence.' I was about to answer, to excuse; but he continued with violence,—'A check by discovery! The king must be covered, and my queen is lost. A miserable *coup de mazette*,—a child could have foreseen it; and a player like me (he turned again to me)—sir, understand once again, that all the women in the world are not worth a queen won by discovery. She is lost! no resource remains. To the devil with the lover and his miss too!'

"Now, of all that had been said, the last reproach was infinitely the most cutting. Carried away by my zeal, I rushed towards him, but catching my coat-skirts unhappily in a neighbouring chess-table down goes the whole concern—the men flying over the floor. This awakens the wrath of a brace of fresh enemies, and confusion becomes confounded. 'Sir!' cries one of them, 'are you mad? do you ever look before you?' The other screams, 'Sir, you have cost me the game!' 'You had already lost it,' observed his antagonist. 'I had won it, sir; I would have played that game against Verdoni, or Philidor himself.' 'Well; but, gentlemen,' mildly observed poor I, 'do not all talk together. I am ready to pay the stake, if the fault were mine.' 'Pay! pay! you are not rich enough, were you to coin your brains and bones.' For how much then were you playing?' 'For honour—for honour, sir. I have come seven hundred miles, post, to accept the challenge of Monsieur here, who fancied himself invulnerable; and but for you I should have given him a lesson—I should have taken down his pride!' 'A lesson! What do you mean? You ought to thank the young man for coming to your assistance as he did. I had your queen won by force in eighteen moves.' 'Absurd! ridiculous! I should have mated you in eleven. I had looked through and through it.' 'Mated me? Can you dare to say so! You it is, sir, I am to thank for this gross insult. Learn, young man, that people don't run in the Café de la Régence.' Up jumps another player. 'And learn you yourself, sir, that people don't shout in the Café de la Régence, and that they have no right even to speak

here.' The hubbub rises; but one source remains. I rush forth from the Café, and take refuge in the Palais Royal."

The Verdoni named by Louvet in this pleasant *morceau* was subsequently well known in England. He was one of the great players frequenting the Régence who composed the celebrated *Traité des Amateurs*, published within those very walls; his chief assistants being Bernard, Léger, and Carlier. The *Traité des Amateurs* is one of the best works on chess ever printed; and it is a thousand pities no kind soul has yet given it to us in an English dress. High science marks many of its games, and there exist nowhere finer examples of chess-combination.

Fashion varies, but man changes not; customs alter their complexion, but human nature runneth in a circle, like the squirrel on its roundabout. Louvet's description of the old café, fifty years back, would hold equally good this very evening; the individuals being a different set, and clothed in garments of other cut and pattern. Still, when we read the roll inscribed with the the names of those who have been great in chess, can we forbear responding to the heartfelt exclamation of the limner, on viewing the works of Raffaele, "I too am a painter?" Fruitless were it, however, to dwell over long on the past, to the neglect of that which moves, and breathes, and walks among us. Bootless is it, to ponder exclusively on that which we know but in spirit; and not to appreciate and admire that which comes home to us in the form of living excellence. As I sit this night in the Régence, shall I suffer my contemporaries all to pass away like a vision, without a faint attempt at least to catch and embody their leading features on the canvass—or the page?

No; "when I forget Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning!" To your darksome caves, ye shadows of the departed great!—to your hills of mist, ye ghosts, warriors of the days of old!—my thoughts be concentrated momentarily on that which I witness. The greatest living chess-players are around me this moment—men linked to me in the strong bonds of our magic masonry; and I catch the inspiration imparted by their presence. That which man has done, man may do. Were Philidor to come again in his strength, like the Cid, who rose from death to smite the Moors for Spain, is it altogether certain we could not find a champion to meet him in the lists?

One, ancient of days, walks quietly across the floor, and hats are raised in token of respect, at the coming in of M. Boncourt, the Nestor of the camp. Seventy years and more have passed over him; but their weight has not bowed down his light and even spirit. To the simplicity of the dove, as regards his dealings with the world, Boncourt unites in chess, the veriest serpent guile. Inferior to none, save De la Bourdonnais, in skill, there breathes not the mortal more free from arrogance or vanity than this our venerable professor. Attired in an old-fashioned frock-coat which sweeps the ground, with a vest of scarlet, or perchance grass-green, Boncourt placidly smooths down his silver locks, as he drops mechanically into his seat before the chess-board. Eccentric in some of his habits, Boncourt in his old age keeps hours which render it difficult to secure him as an antagonist. He delights in dining at ten o'clock at night; and he'll then mate you till cock-crow. Having a comfortable pension as a retired government clerk, he takes the world as he finds it, and practises

the true philosophy of resignation under every stroke of fate, whether in life or in chess. He receives beating better than any Frenchman of his day, shrugging up his shoulders and replacing the men, when defeated, with a *nonchalance* perfectly edifying. His favourite companion is a little dog; well known to the chess circle, and a frequent visitor at the Régence. Boncourt has never been in England, which, considering the present facilities of travelling, is remarkable; and evinces total disregard as to fame, whether present or posthumous.

Boncourt's style of play is *the correct*, rather than *the brilliant*. Comparatively weak in the mechanical openings and endings, from never having looked at a chess-book in his life, Boncourt has no superior in the capacity of piercing through the intricacies of positions of intense difficulty. "In the twenty-five years I have played chess," said La Bourdonnais to me, "never did I see Boncourt commit an error in a crowded situation." His favourite *début* is the *Giuoco Piano*; in the early stages of which he almost invariably drives up his queen's knight's and queen's rook's pawns two squares. I must add that Boncourt has not the usual rapidity of the French school; but is to the full as slow in digesting his chess calculations as *nous autres* in the London Chess Club.

And that young man, Boncourt's present antagonist, who is he? Did you ever see a more pleasant smile, a more intellectual countenance? How smart his dress! How becoming that budding moustache! He is engaged in a match of long standing with Boncourt, and they are to play a game this evening. Rivals in reputation, their respective partisans press around, like Homer's myriad warriors to view the encounter of Hector and Achilles.



Youth has *the call*, and Boncourt by the mob is set down as *passé*; but the elect deem otherwise. The free, gallant bearing of the younger combatant is much in his favour. He has a *bon mot* for each; a smile for all. His eagle eye darts at once over the position of the men, and grasps fully the difficulties and capabilities of the array. He delights in danger; and the excitement of peril lights up his brow with increased expression, and tinges his cheek with a deeper hue. At one time spoken of confidently as the successor to Deschapelles and De la Bourdonnais, ST. AMANT may still be styled the favourite of the Café de la Régence. Certainly, no other player in the world is more agreeable to look over. It is matter of universal regret that St. Amant has in a measure fallen away from his allegiance to the chequered flag he once followed, by night and day, through France and England, and now confines his chess to Sunday evenings.

St. Amant's game unites the dashing style of Greco, with the ingenuity and steadiness of a veteran chief. Young in years, he is aged in chess. Quick as lightning in commonplace situations, St. Amant takes a full measure of contemplation in positions of difficulty. In play with me, I once timed him three quarters of an hour on a single move! None of the French players approach St. Amant for courteousness of demeanor and readiness to oblige. He never sneers at a bad player; never taunts the unfortunate, nor insults the conquered. St. Amant visited England upon the occasion of bearing Deschapelles' proud challenge, a few years back, and had a decided advantage in chess over our best practitioners. He has beaten, in fact, every player but Deschapelles, De la Bourdonnais, and Boncourt. Rather a stickler for reputation, St. Amant declined risking

his laurels upon the occasion of Szen, the Hungarian, visiting Paris in 1835, and refused to accept his challenge. This fact excited some surprise; but the feeling is unfortunately but too common among fine players. St. Amant and Boncourt have played in all about thirty-five games; and Boncourt stands at present, I believe, with a majority of three. Signor Calvi is spoken of latterly as the equal of these two heroes, but does not play at the Régence.

The Régence represents the sun, round which the lesser spheres of light revolve. It is the centre of civilized Europe considered with regard to chess. As Flanders in days of yore was the great battle-ground—the Bois de Boulogne—the Chalk Farm—on or at which nations engaged in the duello, so for above a hundred years has this café served as the grand gladiatorial arena for chess-players of every country and colour. Stamma, the Moor, came hither from Aleppo; and more than one bearded Turk and copper-skinned Hindoo have worshipped chess within these walls. The Régence is the “central flowery land,” receiving courteously, but with dignity, such “outside barbarians” as approach the celestial kingdom, “looking upwards with reverential awe.” The Rialto of Venice, in its most palmy hour, presented not a greater mixture of garbs and tongues than does the Régence at the present time. Szen, from Pesth, came down here one day like a meteor; traversing Calais Straits to London, and back to Poland, in his flying visit of three months. De la Bourdonnais himself could hardly yield Szen the pawn; and the second advent of the Pole it is presumed, will be to aim at taking the proudest ground. It is the Régence which places French players so high, giving them opportunities of encountering every great artist on earth by turns, and thus obtaining a varied and beautiful

style of game. To find a chess amateur of a certain force who has not visited this *locale*, no matter in what clime his residence, were as great a wonder as to fall in with a London Cockney in Rome who had not scratched his name, whether Noakes or Hoakes, upon the crumbling Coliseum, or the pillars of St. Peter. Be it recorded, however, that, despite the fact of ten thousand Englishmen playing chess constantly in the Régence, the frames of its mirrors are guiltless of their initials—the glasses themselves are pure of the diamond-carved “Jack” and “Tom,” which, like the S.P.Q.R. of the Roman nation, serve as a line of beacons, traced upon the face of the whole earth, to assure travellers that a Briton has passed that way.

It cannot be supposed the Régence could so long have held sway, without attempts having been made from time to time to throw off its authority. Man is a restless being, and not to oprone to let well alone. At one time the Café de Foi drew many of the elect aside from the right path. At another period Alexandre, with his Paris Chess Club, at the Café de l'Echiquier, presented himself in open rebellion, and warred against legitimacy. Knocked down, as the Titans were by Jupiter, the club-men have tried again and again to establish themselves, but ever without success. No Paris club, exclusively devoted to chess-players, exists at the moment of my writing; and such aristocratical amateurs as turn up their noses at the Régence are wandering about the metropolis, like the condemned in Vathek's Hall of Eblis, without refuge or resting-place. For a variety of reasons, I do not believe an exclusive chess-club will ever establish itself on a large scale in either Paris or London. Chess was once the game of the aristocracy. It has been wrested from them, with other feudal rights, and is now the

recreation of the million. A chess-room, to prosper, must be open to all classes of comers—free as the air of heaven—accessible, at small cost, to every man who can afford the luxuries of hat and coat. Chess, like the tomb, levels all grades of conventional rank and distinction, and reserves its high places for the best players.

Compared with the other cafés, seldom is the Régence graced with the presence of the fair sex; although women may be seen within its walls. Three ladies are of the company this very moment, and apology is due for my not having earlier noticed their existence. The lady, number one—she with the crimson bonnet, scarlet gown, green feathers, and yellow *Ternaux*—is evidently lost in surprise at the scene. She has dropped in—good soul!—with her husband, to thaw their feet, and share a bottle of *very* small beer on their route home, after a Sunday campaign unusually fatiguing. The lady has never seen chess played before, although in her sixtieth year; and classes the men as a species of skittles, cut down in dimensions to suit the degeneracy of modern muscle. She gapes around in mute ecstasy of wonder, with a look of unequivocal contempt for the poor creatures, who can express so much enthusiasm over a few toys of wood. Little drinking, and less eating, is going on, which adds in no inconsiderable degree to Madame's astonishment, at the enjoyment the party appear to take in their occupations. She has always respected dominoes; she will henceforth venerate them. She nudges her *caro* to empty his glass, before the lunatics around begin to bite!

Our dame, number two, a hale *bourgeoise* of forty-five, has been excepted by number one from her sweeping condemnation; for this fair person, *très comme il faut*, is

actually engaged at dominoes with her beau : filling up the intervals between the games, by stuffing herself with savoury biscuits, steeped in sugared Madeira. Number two is shrill of voice, hearty of laugh, lusty as the Swiss giantess on the Boulevard du Temple. She is merry with wine and compliments, and shouts in the battle like the Mohicans raising their war-whoop. When she gives a yell of victory, her voice, like an essential distillation of the lungs of twenty Grisis, rises sublimely above the surrounding orchestra of sounds. The chess-players glance growlingly from their boards at the annoyance, the more intolerable as not coming from one of their own corps ; and the profane term of *grosse vache* is unhesitatingly muttered, as applicable to this, one of the three representatives of the women of France, by a *vieux moustache*, my next table neighbour, with most un-Paris-like *politesse*. The French, however, are not always particular about doing the pleasing, if their personal comforts are entrenched upon—but let that pass. The fat lady cares little for aught, save herself and her friend. If they don't like her laugh, they can leave it ; there is room outside, although inside places are the more comfortable on a snowy night. Number two is engaged in a domino-party of one hundred games, of which there are not above seventy-eight yet to be played out. The wily spirit of the sex teaches her that she is at present a nuisance ; and she fancies herself a Joan of Arc in the species of warfare carrying on. Let her alone, silly Frenchmen, you ought to know woman better. Cease your murmurings ! appear not to be aware of her presence ; and triumph will open her gentle heart to the softer emotions of pity. It will cost her contented beau another glass of Madeira, which she will drink in token of a general peace,

and many a day hence will she laugh exultingly at the recollections connected with the night on which she gave the chess-players their own—and something more. Good evening, Madame, and pleasant slumbers! The youngest of the fair trio awaits her profile.

Number three presents, indeed, a study for an artist; for not only is she playing chess, but playing it well. Her bonnet of beaver, and quiet cloak of grey, cannot conceal a face replete with beauty and intelligence. A mere girl, you can read in her expressive eye that the mind within answers to the grace without. A suffused blush is on her cheek, and the smile of conquest plays tremblingly around her lip. Her antagonist, a fine young fellow *rather* overdressed, is clearly her lover; and instead of calculating his moves, he has been looking in her bright eyes to the very verge of checkmate, happier in defeat than any other chess-player present in the height of triumph. The youth is nothing more than a small clerk, with a yearly salary of twelve hundred francs; the damsel, a superior kind of sempstress, just redeemed by chess from the class—*grisette*. Oh! I can read their whole history at a glance. He has rented an apartment adjoining that of her parents; and cultivating the intimacy, has taught her chess and love. Papa and mamma have consented, and the wedding will take place in the spring. Adieu, gentle girl! Peace be around thee for ever; and may thy children play chess as well as their parents. So shall they be taught to shun dangerous and frivolous amusements, and grow up a credit to the game which gave their father—a mate!

A flying hint to the ladies. Cupid has no one arrow in his quiver more sharp at the point than chess. Let the unmarried, who wish to cross the pale, look to it. Had

Beatrice played chess with Benedict, the gentleman would have been brought to cry "Ransom!" in half the time Shakspeare expends on bending him to his knees. You sit down to chess with a loveable kind of being. In the scramble to place the pieces, you both aim at setting up the same queen, and both miss the mark. There is a confusion of hands; and the lady's small white fingers are pressed in the clasp of her adversary, before he recognises the mistake. He colours up—she colours down—both are confused. Depend upon it, he'll squeeze the hand again, if he can; and how may he help it?

The great variety of character developed in the Café de la Régence is not the least interesting feature of the picture. The French are the worst losers in the world; in more ways than one. I have seen them, when checkmated, dash the men about the floor, with as many *sacré tonnerres* as would sink a seventy-four. They are, moreover, not *too* exact in the settlement of certain small debts of honour, for which judgment is sometimes claimed in our chequer court. A very small stake is necessarily risked at the Régence; it being the custom that the loser on the balance pays the sixteen-sous tribute levied by the *garçon* for the use of the chess equipment for the sitting, no matter how long. A half-franc or franc is occasionally wagered on the game, in addition; and this slender slip of silver creates a system of petty Greekism, which, like that of Newmarket, bears many branches. While you go on, game after game, dropping your coin kindly and readily, Monsieur is funny and gentlemanly enough; but turn the tables upon him, and the *pestes* and *sacrés* break bounds audibly. "Base is the slave who pays" is often the maxim. I once played, when a youngster, in the Régence, several days consecu-

tively, with a regular old soldier, at half-a-franc the game, and departed after each sitting, minus some two or three francs. Now it happened that upon one glorious occasion, rising to leave, I found myself to be for the first time on the credit-side of the account. One half-franc was the sum due to me ; and I could not forbear smiling at the rueful look of my very respectable friend on casting up the score. Poor fellow ! deeply, and slowly, and vainly, did he dive for the needful. The silver would not come ; the pockets were free from encumbrance. Feeling pity for the man's position, I turned to quit the café, saying, "never mind," and all that. "Monsieur," cried the gentleman, gravely, "*je suis Français—je suis homme d'honneur*—what do you mean by going thus without your money ?—*rendez-moi un demi-franc*." Of course I complied, handing him the change I supposed him to require, and presenting him my palm, to grasp the larger piece of silver in return. "Now, sir," quoth Monsieur, dropping the cash into his pocket with a low bow, "now, sir, I owe you a franc, which I shall do myself the honour to pay the very first opportunity."

This last recollection walked into my mind through the circumstance of a man's crossing the room, a fair average sample of a class not unknown, either to the frequenters of the Régence, or of the London chess divans, as a tribe of Arabs to whom the "little shilling" is a thing of system. He claims an especial paragraph ; and even the devil shall have his due. So stand back, ladies and gentlemen, and make room for the great Monsieur Pillefranc.

The Sieur Pillefranc dwells in a *mansarde*, for he is high of soul, and loves to soar above the crowd. He has neither employment nor sinecure, beyond an annuity of three hundred francs yearly ; and depends for further



means upon Providence and the chess-board. Poor as he really is, write him a billet without styling him *propriétaire*, and your chance of reply were slender. At the Café de la Régence, seven days in the week this player occupies one particular chair, the leathern bottom of which he has worn to rags three several times during his five-and-thirty years' war. A good chess practitioner of what I term the cast-iron school, he plays with great rapidity; and so as he dispatches his enemy, cares not how. He knocks down knights and bishops as though they were ninepins, rarely winning by checkmate; but preferring the certainty of picking off your men in detail, one at a time, until the board is a blank. In aiming at mate, he knows he *might* make a blunder, even with queen and rook against a pawn; and the wise will run no risk. M. Pillefranc is the most modest of bipeds. He speaks ever of himself as a mere block, stock, and stone. He owns to having acquired the rudiments of the game—plays daily *pour se désennuyer* merely—and protests he would not encounter La Bourdonnais at the rook for pins; the truth being that he is about what is termed, in club parlance, a knight-player. In thirty-five years, M. Pillefranc has never purposely played a single party with a better player;—I say *purposely*, because the greatest tactician may now and then catch a Tartar; although, even in such case, ways are frequently found by a captor of genius to “bring him along.” M. Pillefranc plays upon a system; his system being to win. “Make money, my son,” says the dying lawyer; “honestly, if you can; but make money.” A stranger enters the café, and is invited smilingly by the Pillefranc to play a game—of course, for nothing. The new comer wins once, twice, thrice; and Monsieur quietly tries the question of “*Voulez*

*vous intéresser la partie?*”—the stake proposed, never, I must own, exceeding *vingt sous*. But somehow it happens, although really I know not how, that, after the franc is wagered, the stranger wins less and less, and at last cannot win at all; but yet goes away comfortable, for if he lost the four last games (at a franc), did he not win the first three (played gratis)? An appointment is made for next day; and the Frenchman, hating to win money, chivalrously proposes to render odds. “I think I could give, perhaps, pawn and move,” says he; and I, who have looked over his play some years, think he could give a castle! But even at the pawn, Pillefranc will not take *every* game. No; Monsieur knows better than to kill the bird which lays the egg, and stands so quietly to have its tail salted. Pillefranc wins at each sitting a small but certain majority. He speaks with profound respect of the stranger’s skill; and the latter boasts in society that he plays daily with the great Monsieur Pillefranc, who can only give him pawn and move!

Should a chess-player of acknowledged force ask our adventurer to play, the Frenchman has the headache, or is going away, or is waiting for somebody—from the kingdom of the moon! You are fain to take the excuse; but, as you glance from your *Galignani* to the stove by which sits Monsieur, you may mark his cold, grey eye, watching the door,—like a hawk about to dart upon a pullet; or a cat under a gooseberry-bush looking out for a fat sparrow; or a bloated spider coiled up in its meshes, eager to hug some unsophisticated and tender fly. I am fond of a simile, and if those given be too homely, let us compare him to one of those obscure and foul birds of prey—the grizzly vulture, perched upon the topmost point of a blasted rock,

whetting beak and talon, while his keen sight traverses sea and land in quest of quarry. A greenhorn is not long wanting, and Monsieur nails him down to the mahogany; taking care, as you are within hearing, to tender the invite in a low tone, that you may believe this was the gentleman he told you he expected. Should the preliminary game with a fresh hand cause Pillefranc to believe he has hooked a trout too strong for his tackle, with that one battle does the war then and thereafter for ever cease and determine. Should the visitor again decline peremptorily to play for money, most assuredly will he never henceforth be honoured with the light of M. Pillefranc's countenance over the chess-field.

With all this cutting, carving, and contriving, the wants of our Paris sharp are few, and his habits of life simple. White does Pillefranc mark the day in his calendar, on which Fortune, or Lafitte's diligence, brings a generous Englishman to the altar of immolation, a victim who will lose his three francs by two o'clock. Adieu for that day to chess. John Bull demands his *revanche*, but is put off on account of "a particular engagement with a lady." To the *proprietaire* it is *jour de fête*, and he resolves to enjoy it accordingly. He bows lower than ever to the damsel at the desk, and sallies forth a *flaneur* of the first order, to sun himself on the Boulevard Italien. His faded hat is cocked smartly on his left temple, his cane is poised musket-fashion, and his coat buttoned tightly across the chest to give a military air to his long and attenuated figure. He sings as he goes, but disdains tunes below *A te O cara*, or *Ma Normandie*; and these he hums in everlasting *encores*, to the jingling accompaniment of the three francs in his astonished pocket. Bulwer's *bon-vivant* regrets that man

can dine but once a-day. M. Pillefranc dines many times that afternoon ; devouring, in anticipation, the whole *carte* of Paris cookery, from end to end. He asks the price of a diamond-ring, and pronounces it cheap at two hundred louis. His blood is for the time ethereal, and you could hardly sour his temper, even by a kicking. He lounges round the glittering *cafés* of the Boulevards as if he had just come forth, or were about to enter ; reminding me of a fashionmonger I once knew, who regularly went at midnight to the doors of the Italian Opera to see the company come out ! Pillefranc basks in the warm air, like a May-fly, until six o'clock ; when, having duly aired his appetite, he slips into the *restaurant*, termed *Les Trois Vierges*, in the Rue St. Martin, where he luxuriates over three courses and a dessert,—a fork, a napkin, and a toothpick,—half a bottle of wine, and *pain a discretion*,—all for the small charge of twenty-two sous.

Now I pronounce this man to be a chess-problem, more difficult of solution than any one you will find in the writings of the learned. If his happiness really depend upon chess, why not play with acknowledged artists ; and enjoy the excitement derived from encountering a noble foe, in preference to the chasing and slaying of “rats and mice, and such small deer ?” If, again, his pursuit be money—if he really want to eat, if he humble himself to lie, *swivel*, and swindle for silver—surely he could earn a couple of francs in fifty different ways, in one half the time, and at a quarter the cost of brain. I can understand a man’s cutting a throat, or stopping the mail, or selling a race, for a thousand pounds, but I cannot comprehend filching one poor franc at a time !

There is but one way to solve the riddle. Pillefranc

loves the hunt of small game, as there exist men who can find pleasure in baiting a rat. Pillefranc's enjoyment is in the torture of his victim. He licks him, and oils him all over, with gloating eye, as the serpent slavers the antelope while breaking his bones, to make him slippery of swallow. Pillefranc racks his adversary with the zest of the Popish inquisitor. He rubs his nerves with a saw, and smiles at the agonies he elicits. Pillefranc was born too late. He ought to have been dungeon-keeper to some feudal baron. A believer in the Pythagorean transmission of soul might fancy the spirits of Lafemas and Trois Echelles condensed into the inward man of M. Pillefranc.

The family of Pillefranc is large, but its members never play chess with each other. Wolf tears not wolf, thief robs not thief. You may espy at times a brace of the Pillefrancs, sitting amicably side by side, engaged in conversation ; each watching to do a little business on his own account, like Thames watermen waiting for a fare. When a flat draws near, the scramble to secure him is *too* ludicrous, either Greek popping the question in so smiling and indifferent a tone of voice. The Pillefrancs never talk of their profession, but it is conventionally assumed that they are all honourable men—most perfect gentlemen. As the foulest thing has its use, so may M. Pillefranc be made serviceable to the tyro who wants a block to chop at. Three hours' amusement are surely worth a crown ; and thus you get a pennyworth for your penny, and take it with your eyes open. And with this, M. Pillefranc, I bid you God speed—*au revoir*. Go back to the dark abode from which I have momentarily called you forth, and get your bread honestly—if you can. It is to be noted that none of the first-rate artists practise the dirty tricks of

Pillefranc. They render large odds, and are quite satisfied to have *the turn* in their favour.

\* \* \* \* \*

A change comes over the Régence, and the noise reaches its climax, as if the elements of confusion in the caldron had received their final stirabout. What portly form do we see making its way through the crowd, at this, the eleventh hour? Fifty persons accost him at once, all eager to wind up the evening with one more game;—all shouting, and laughing, and screaming, with the peculiar and prodigious gesticulations of *La belle France*, rising many octaves above concert pitch. The crash is terrific. Not to know the potentate, who enters with noise exceeding that of drum and trumpet, were indeed to prove yourself unknown. The new-comer is DE LA BOURDONNAIS, since the retirement of Deschapelles, the acknowledged first chess-player in the world.

M. De la Bourdonnais is of noble family, being grandson to that Governor of the Mauritius, immortalized by St. Pierre in *Paul and Virginia*. De la Bourdonnais is now about forty-five years of age. He was educated in the College of Henri IV., but has never followed any profession except chess, which he took up as a passion about five-and-twenty years back. La Bourdonnais inherited a small paternal estate; but, I regret to say, that this was devoured by some unfortunate building speculation at St. Maloes. His frame is large and square, the head presenting a fine study for a phrenologist, bearing the organs of calculation enormously developed. Solid and massive, the head of La Bourdonnais is a true Napoleon front; carved out of marble, and placed upon shoulders of granite, like those of Ajax Telamon. That eye so piercing, looks

through and through the board, so as to convey the feeling that La Bourdonnais could really see well in the dark, which hypothesis accounts for his playing so beautifully blindfold.

You have never seen La Bourdonnais at chess? Come, then; although late, this is a glorious opportunity. He is about to give the rook to Boissy d'Anglas, *pair de France*; let us hasten to get a favourable position for looking on. The spectators of the duel are no mean men:—General Haxo, who commanded the artillery for the Son of Thunder at Waterloo; Méry, the poet; Lacretelle, the naturalist; Calvi, Chamouillet, Robello, and others of the *élite*, are in the press; while the venerable Chevalier de Barneville, nearly ninety years of age, who has played with Philidor and with Jean Jacques, serves as the connecting link of three generations, and reminds one of Philidor himself come back to witness the triumphs of his illustrious heir. I would rather play chess a day with De la Bourdonnais than spend a week with Sardanapalus.

From the east and the west, from the north and the south, have players come to kneel at the footstool of the monarch. They present themselves under smiling pretences; but nerved, nevertheless, to have a pluck at his diadem. Hitherto, all have tried in vain; none having encountered La Bourdonnais, for fifteen years, to whom he could not give the pawn, with the single exception of the late Mr. M'Donnell. At this moment, bowed down to earth with a cruel malady, De la Bourdonnais plays chess as well as ever. His great spirit rises above bodily suffering, and triumphs over pain. May health be shortly restored to him!

"Steady and ready," is the motto of De la Bourdonnais.

If challenged to engage in an important match, no preparation is required beyond half an hour's notice. He will play you at any time, by night or by day, or both; rendering freely the most liberal odds, his stake being from one franc to a hundred. If any one mode of training for the battle be more in favour with our chief than another, it is perhaps that of Gargantua; who, when he came to the Paris schools, to dispute with the sages of the Seine, "refreshed himself," says Rabelais, "two or three days; making very merry with his folks, and inquiring what men of learning there were in the city, *and what wine they drank there.*"

The quickness with which La Bourdonnais calculates the *coups* is a beautiful part of his game. Since Philidor, he has never, in this respect, been equalled, Deschappelles having been a much slower player. When I first had the honour of measuring weapons with De la Bourdonnais over the chess-board, his rapidity was to me positively terrific. I was lost in the whirl. You raise your hand to play a move, and up go the Frenchman's fingers in readiness to present his answer, before you have travelled half way towards the piece you mean to touch. You move, and your opponent replies, ere your arm has regained its resting place. This bustle tries English nerves cruelly. We whip and spur, but cannot live the pace. If you are very slow, he does not hesitate to tap the table lustily. You labour out a ten minutes calculation; and then, congratulating yourself on having *done the deed*, sink back in your chair to enjoy a heavenly interval of repose. Vain hope!—mistaken mortal! In less than a single moment, La Bourdonnais plays his counter-stroke; and, wishing your adversary at *tous les diables*, you recommence, like him of Tartarus,



the never-ending task of rolling the stone up the mountain. Custom reconciles you, however, to the railroad speed of La Bourdonnais ; and, comparing it with the broad-wheeled waggons we too often are compelled to travel by in this country, you say, " This is, indeed, chess ! " La Bourdonnais first introduced the piercing the sides of the chess-board, like a cribbage machine, in order to peg the number of games played at a sitting. He tells them off by the score !

The rapidity of De la Bourdonnais can only, in fact, be equalled by his gluttony for the game. Nothing satiates him, or causes him to cry, " Hold !—enough ! " His chess hours are from noon till midnight, seven times a week. He seems to be a species of chess-automaton, wound up to meet all conceivable cases with mathematical accuracy. When he played his famed match here of nearly one hundred games with our M'Donnell, the hour of meeting being between eleven and twelve A.M., the encounter has frequently continued until six or seven P.M. ; after which Mr. M'Donnell would cease playing, exhausted frequently even to weariness. Not so De la Bourdonnais. He would snatch a hasty dinner by the side of the chessboard, and in ten minutes be again enthroned in his chair, the hero of the hundred fights giving rook, or knight, or pawn, as the case might be, to any opponent who presented ; fresh as the dewy morn, and vigorous as though 'twere breakfast-time. He would play thus till long past midnight ; smoking cigars, drinking punch, and pouring forth his full soul in even boisterous merriment ; dismissing at times his punch in favour of what he termed, " Burton ale-beer," the only fault of which, he was wont to say, was, that after three or four bottles, he became additionally impatient, if he

found his adversary slow. I recollect that upon one occasion he played above forty games of chess at a sitting, with amateurs of every grade of skill; and with all this, he had to be at his post to encounter M'Donnell in the morning.

The habits of De la Bourdonnais over the board are, indeed, the very reverse of what would be expected from so profound a thinker; but he appears to be divided into two existences,—the one of which does the chess, the other the fun. Jokes, songs, and epigrams, burst in a flood from his lips, in tones like those of Lablache. This is, of course, chiefly after dinner, when giving large odds, and *when winning*; for, should the tables turn in the latter respect, the brows of our friend lour like the storm-clouds of Mont Blanc. De la Bourdonnais expressed himself to me, as being altogether confounded at the imperturbability of M'Donnell under defeat. Our countryman, at one sitting, lost three games running; "And yet," quoth La Bourdonnais, "he could smile! Had it been me," added the Frenchman, emphatically, "I should have torn the hair from my head!"—and so he would.

No passing events can shake the attention of La Bourdonnais when at chess. He concocts jests and mates in the same crucible. *Une petite position* is what he aims at from the beginning. Let him once attain that, and be sure he'll hold his own. When the joke and the laugh rise highest, then look out for squalls, and reef your top-sails. To you it is dark night, but to his leopard-eye the first rays of the sun are gilding the mountain top. His advantage improves, and he absolutely smothers you in mystification and nonsense. Taruffi once met Ercole del Rio in a chess café; and when beaten soundly, exclaimed, "You must be either the devil or Del Rio!" The mortality

of our hero is certainly at times to be suspected. The clearness with which he foresees consequences, through a long vista of checks and changes, is truly admirable. No man sacrifices a piece so well ; none know so fully the art of *playing the proper move at the proper time*. When hard pushed, his *coups de resource* are electrifying. Win a piece, it is a trifle ; nothing short of killing him outright will avail you. Strike him merely to the earth, and Antaeus-like, he rises stronger from the fall. "I should never have given up chess," said Deschapelles once to me, "except in favour of La Bourdonnais. He is worthy to sustain the honour of my school, and in his hands the reputation of France is safe !"

De la Bourdonnais has not disdained to study books. He has played through all that has been written. The openings are familiar to him. He has the most dashing variations of attack at his fingers' end, and meets a new mode of assault intuitively with the strongest defence. He is not like one fine player who can only conduct the middles of games well ; or another, who possesses but the mechanical knowledge of openings and endings. De la Bourdonnais plays every part of chess well ; the pieces in a complicated situation, above all, beautifully. His pawn-play, towards the close of the game, is superb ; as a judge of what we term "position," he stands alone. Many established axioms he appears to disregard, but this arises from the species of second-sight he possesses over the board. Isolated pawns he thinks of "*not over much*," a piece in danger troubles him not. Set-openings he laughs to scorn, and breaks up what the tyro has been taught, and rightly taught, to think legitimate rules. The genius of a La Bourdonnais, or a Napoleon, makes its own laws,

and owns none other. De la Bourdonnais plays to check-mate, and he does it; what would you have more? He bowls at the adverse king, with the force, and celerity, and deadly sweep of a Mynn, or a congreve rocket.

The game we are looking over is done; De la Bourdonnais gives check-mate, and the noise becomes positively infernal. Not only do all chatter at once, but, like the talking bird in the Eastern tale, each man appears endowed with twenty different voices. A rush is made towards the chess-board, and a dozen hands snatch at the pieces, to shew what the unfortunate loser could, would, should, or might have done. Thus was Job comforted of old, and thus do the tormentors attack a man already suffering sufficient disquiet in being beaten. The English are the best lookers-on in the world, the French the very worst. They do not hesitate, during the most interesting crisis, to whisper their opinions freely; to point with their hands over the board; to foretell the probable future; to vituperate the past. It is hard to play before such critics; and rather trying to the nerves to hear yourself styled, perhaps, "an ass," for what you thought a neat bit of play; or to see lips coiling, and sneering, and smiling contemptuously at your proceedings, knowing that the scornors in a similar case would play ten times worse than you have done. When your move is made, half a dozen voices are loudly raised to demand "*Pourquoi diable*, you didn't do this?" or, "Why you overlooked that?" I have lost many games in Paris through similar impertinences, and have all but vowed that when next I played chess there, it should be in a barricaded room. Talking of barricades, I may here remark that never was the Café de la Régence more thronged with chess-players than during

the three glorious days of July, 1830. Speak of parting lovers! why 'twere easier to sunder Romeo and Juliet, than two staunch chess-players over a good game. Ten revolutions working at once around—the sun and moon dancing the *chahut*, with the stars whirling by in joyous gallopade—no wreck of worlds or systems could, I say, sever two real chess enthusiasts in the heat of battle.

To those who think I exaggerate the noise of the Régence at the close of the evening, I can only say, witness it before passing judgment. In singing and spitting, its inmates are particularly strong; would they all sang the same tune, and spat only, as French lady-vocalists do on the stage, between the verses. I know Frenchmen who, at chess, expectorate airs with variations, and are quite surprised we do not sanction the custom. Cigars are forbidden in the Régence. This is as it should be. The same moral rule which permits one individual in a public room, to blow second-hand tobacco-smoke in your face, should be equally lenient to the smokers of opium, valerian, or assafoetida. Eat, drink, or suck what you will yourself, but do not force me to go shares against my will.

To whom is destined the marshal's baton when De la Bourdonnais throws it down, and what country will furnish his successor? The speculation is interesting. Will Gaul continue the dynasty by placing a fourth Frenchman on the throne of the world?—the three last chess-chiefs having been successively Philidor, Deschapelles, and De la Bourdonnais. I have my doubts. Boncourt is passing, St. Amant forsaking chess; and there is no third son of France worthy of being borne on the books, save as a petty officer. May we hope that the laurel is growing in England? No! Ten thousand reasons forbid the supposi-

tion. Germany, Holland, and Belgium, contain no likely man. At present, De la Bourdonnais, like Alexander the Great, is without heir, and there is room to fear the empire may be divided eventually under a number of petty kings. M. Deschappelles considers that chess is an affair of the sun, and that the cold north can never produce a first-rate chess organization. I cannot admit the truth of the hypothesis; since we find the north, in our time, bringing forth the hardest thinkers of the day in every department. Calvi of Italy will go far in chess; but so will Szen of Poland, and Kæsaritzky of Livonia. The imperial name of the latter is alone a pawn in his favour; but, I repeat, the future is yet wrapped in darkness. \* \*

De la Bourdonnais and his illustrious staff have left the Régence; the players are thinning rapidly off; the drums have beaten the round, and the good wives of Paris are airing their husbands' nightcaps. The *garçons* yawn and sigh as they watch the termination of the last dominoe party. Even that comes to its end, and the Régence is nearly vacant; the counter is abdicated; the café is cleared; my friend has gone, and the gas seems going. I am alone in the field of battle—the last man of the campaign. Midnight has struck its long, long bell, and I reluctantly prepare to face the cold. Farewell, at least for a season, to THE CAFE DE LA REGENCE! I go forth to pick my solitary way, through thy now snowy mud, O Paris! praying most fervently to the saint who watcheth over chess-players, that my *portier* may not be in the heaven of dreams, but that I may be permitted to obtain entrance to mine inn, *before* the tenth time of ringing!

# RUY LOPEZ, THE CHESS-BISHOP.

## A LEGEND OF SPAIN.

“The flood of time is rolling on—  
 We stand upon its brink, whilst **THEY** are gone  
 To glide in peace down death’s mysterious stream.  
 —Have **YE** done well? They moulder flesh and bone  
 Who might have made this life’s envenomed dream  
 A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste, I deem.”—SHELLEY.

ALL the world believes that Ruy Lopez was created a bishop by Philip II. for his transcendant skill in chess; but the real circumstances of his investiture with the mitre have been hitherto enveloped in that veil of time which darkens over so many romantic incidents of the past. Common report is a common liar. The lowly priest rose not to cope and stole through chess alone, but was indebted for his rank to a freak of fortune, as wildly extravagant as any one frolic of the laughter-loving fiend of the Hartz mountain. Romance has well been styled tame, compared with the incidents of real life. Since the laying bare to public view the records of Spain’s oldest monastic libraries, consequent upon the reign of anarchy in which that fine kingdom has been plunged for the few last years,

many curious scenes of the past have emerged from Cimmerian darkness to the light of modern day. Listen to one of the least of them.

King Philip sat in the Escorial, playing chess with Ruy Lopez, that great master of our mighty art, who knelt by especial favour with one knee on a cushion of brocade, while a party of nobles were standing grouped around, in varied attitudes of sorrowful and serious attention. The morn was bright as the orange-groves of Granada; and the sun streamed through the lofty arches of the windows upon the gorgeously decorated hall, shaded by curtains of violet-coloured velvet, light as the dreams of hope upon the mind of sanguine youth. But the day-star of heaven seemed at that moment hardly congenial with the deep gloom which evidently hung upon the royal presence; for the brow of Philip was dark as the thunder-cloud, ere it breaks on the hills of the Alpuxarres. The monarch glanced from beneath his bushy eyebrows frequently and fiercely towards the arched doors of entrance; the chiefs exchanged, stealthily, many sad looks of meaning intelligence; and **THE CHESSE** was clearly not uppermost in the mind of any one man present, saving our priest, Ruy Lopez, the learned clerk of Zafra, who was plodding out a certain forced checkmate in some half-dozen moves, and in whose inward soul was working a warm struggle as to which ought to be allowed to take the upper hand upon this occasion,—his own proper and dear reputation as the first chess-player in the country, or the politic deference due to Europe's most Catholic majesty, Philip, lord of the fair lands of Spain and her dependencies.

The portals swung suddenly open, and a coarse, sinister-looking man presented himself somewhat abruptly before



the king, awaiting silently the royal command to speak. The intruder's appearance was highly unprepossessing; and the courtiers imperceptibly drew up as though a serpent had glided in among them. Of sturdy frame, attired in a doublet of shaggy black leather, the face of the man presented the low-arched forehead and sordid mouth peculiar to the habitual exercise of vulgar passions, while his features acquired a cast of increased brutality from the scar which traversed them obliquely from brow to chin, burying itself in a huge uncombed beard, as coarse as hemp. Philip trembled as he made an effort to speak, and a quivering galvanic shudder passed around. The new comer was Fernando Calavar, Spain's chief executioner.

"Is he dead?" *choked* Philip, in hoarse and smothered tones.

"My liege, he lives as yet. A grandee of Spain, he pleads the privileges of his order; and I may not deal with one of the pure Hidalgo strain, without more especial bidding from your majesty."

A subdued murmur of approbation broke from the proud peers around, and the blood of old Castile danced brighter upon lip and cheek. The young Alonzo d'Ossuna suddenly donned his cap of estate; and his bold example was followed by the majority of those present, their white plumes towering forestlike in the air, as they thus appeared to enter a tacit protest in defence of their rights at large, by availing themselves of the privilege immutably held by Spain's grandees, to stand covered at will, before their sovereign. The sullen Philip yet knit his brows still closer, and struck his clenched hand heavily upon the chess-board,—

"By our own council has he been tried and condemned

to death. What dares the traitor now demand?" inquired the king.

"Sire, he asks to die by axe and block, and to be left alone in solitude during the last three hours of life with a priest."

"Granted," said Philip. "Is not our own confessor in attendance upon him, as I commanded?"

"He is, may it please your majesty; but the duke is contumacious, and laughs the holy Diaz di Zilva to scorn. He says he will take absolution from none under the rank of a bishop in Spain's church, such being the prerogative of a noble, doomed to die by sentence of law for high treason."

"Certainly, such is our privilege," boldly interposed the gallant D'Ossuna; "and we claim our cousin's rights at the hand of our king."

"Our rights and the justice of the king are indissoluble," repeated Don Diego de Tarraxas, count of Valencia, an aged man of gigantic height, with flowing silvery hair and beard; who, clothed in steel, and bearing the baton of Spain's high-constable, stood carelessly leaning on his sheathed Toledo.

"Our rights and privileges!" cried half-a-dozen nobles in a breath.

Philip started up from his ebony throne, and the thunder-cloud exploded,—

"By the bones of the Campeador, by the soul of St. Iago, have I sworn," cried the monarch, sternly and collectedly, "neither to eat nor to drink, at board or banquet, until I have looked upon the head of Guzman, the traitor! But Tarraxas has well spoken,—the justice of the king binds up the rights of all his subjects. Time flies. Lord constable, where nearest dwells a bishop?"

"I have had ever more to do with the camp than the church," bluntly replied De Tarraxas. "Your majesty's royal almoner, Don Silvas, here present, may surely better answer the question."

Don Silvas y Mendez tremblingly took up the word,—

"May the king live!—the bishop of Segovia is attached to his majesty's household; but he died last week, and the fiat to appoint his successor even now lies on the council table, subject to the pope's veto. A convocation of the heads of the church is being held at Valladolid, and all the bishops will be at this time there. I know that the bishop of Madrid left his palace yesterday, to attend that meeting."

A faint smile played across the lip of D'Ossuna. He was of the Guzman blood, and the condemned duke was his dearest friend. The king caught his glance, and a new expression shone in his own leaden, heavy eye,—

"We are king," said Philip, slowly and austere, "and our throne may not be altogether mocked. This sceptre is, it may be, light in weight, but the fool that sports with it, will find it crush him like an iron pillar. Our holy father the pope is somewhat in my debt on the score of obligation, and we fear not his disapproval of the step we are about to take. If the King of Spain can beget a prince, he can surely create a bishop. Stand forth, Ruy Lopez, Bishop of Segovia! Stand forth, priest, I command, and assume thy rank in the church!"

Ruy Lopez arose from his fotstool, but hesitated,—“May it please your majesty——”

“Peace, lord-bishop, and obey thy sovereign's word! The formalities of thy instalment remain for a future day. Our subjects cannot fail to respect the will of the king in

this matter. Bishop of Segovia, away with Calavar to the chamber of the condemned ! Shrive the soul from sin, and at the end of three hours give the body up to our axe of justice. Don Guzman de Montez, prince of Calatrava and duke of Medina Sidonia, surely dies the death this day. And hark ye, Calavar, in this apartment do we await thy return with the head of the traitor ; and if thou fail us in exact obedience, better were it for thee never to have been born. Ruy Lopez, I invest thee with mine own signet-ring, lest the duke doubt thy word. Ha, gentlemen !" added the monarch, tauntingly, " dare ye now question the justice of your king ?"

No voice responded. Ruy Lopez followed Calavar from the presence ; and the king, quietly resuming his seat, waved to one of his chief favourites, Don Ramirez, count of Biscay, to face him at the chess-board. " With chess, my lords, and your good and loyal company, will I pass away this tiresome interval, and none of ye will leave the hall, until the return of Calavar."

So the king and Don Ramirez commenced a fresh game of chess ; and the nobles, leaning as they best might, to support their wearied limbs, stood pensively grouped in similar postures and attitudes as when our tale began.

Meanwhile Calavar led the newly created father of the church through many a winding hall and gloomy arch. Ruy Lopez walked as one walks in a dream. His was not the heart to hurt even bird, or flower, or fly. In the silence of that heart he cursed both court and king. True, he was Bishop of Segovia, but heavy was the price, at which he felt the dignity had to be purchased. The Guzman, too, his own esteemed patron—the first chess amateur in Spain. Ruy Lopez prayed, as he passed over the cold marble cor-

ridor which led to the prisons of state, that its deeps would open and swallow him alive.

In a narrow oaken-panelled chamber, its iron door strongly guarded with bolt and bar, paced the doomed Prince of Calatrava, with agitated and most unequal steps. The floor was covered with thick coarse matting; the cell's only furniture, besides, being a massive table, a couple of heavy wooden stools, and a rudely carved crucifix, fixed in a small recess opposite the one narrow arched window, which lighted the apartment. The lattice was at lofty elevation, and crossed carefully with iron bars, through whose slender apertures played even then the sunbeams, as if in mockery of man, his torturings and his agonies. Ruy Lopez faced the duke, and the noble captive courteously saluted his visitor. O vanity of earthly possessions! Yes, he, the gallant Guzman, the king's especial favourite, the noble and the brave, was bidden unto death, most innocently, in the full pride of youth and vigour. Heavy were the proofs of his alleged treason; the chief being an intercepted despatch in the Guzman's own handwriting, to the throne of France, in which a plan was proposed to take the life of Philip. Firm in the strength of rectitude, the duke's contemptuous silence upon accusation had filled up, apparently, the measure of his treason. He faced the storm as a column of granite, but the thunder-stroke had dashed him earthwards. Don Guzman had braved death in every form, and blanched not for himself at this sudden beckoning away of its pale, pale arm; but his soul sank when he thought of the lady of his love, his betrothed bride, the beautiful and young Estella, who as yet knew nought of woe or suffering, as she trustingly awaited Calatrava's coming to claim her hand, in the halls of her sires, on the banks of the Guadalquivir.

Calavar, the executioner, bluntly reported the monarch's mandate, and the priest sorrowfully confirmed the tidings. Don Guzman acknowledged the presence of a bishop, and bent his knee to receive the blessing of our chess-player. "In three hours, then, I am thine," said the duke, with majesty, as he waved Calavar forth. The ruffian retired, and Ruy Lopez and the Hidalgo were left alone, the bishop trembling as though palsy-stricken. The duke pressed his confessor's hand in silence. It is something to think we have yet one friend.

"You and I have met," said Don Guzman, after a long pause, "under happier circumstances."

"We have," faltered out the new-born bishop. A stranger would have thought Ruy Lopez the doomed man of the two.

"Yes! and when in the presence of Philip and the court you played your great match with Paolo Boi, the Sicilian, it was upon my right arm our monarch leaned. And now!"

"I wish to Heaven I were in Nova Hispania!" thought Ruy Lopez! but nerving himself, he continued, aloud, "All these, dear son and friend, are idle thoughts. Lose not the time allowed to you to make your peace with Heaven! but let us pray together hopefully that the holy offices of the church may cleanse the soul from spot, and thus prepare it for the mighty change."

"A change indeed!" exclaimed the noble captain. "And yet, let but a few short years pass away, and what will it have mattered? Chess-players as we both are, how well come home Cervantes' words that life is but a game of chess. I forget the exact passage, but its meaning is that whereas on earth men play different parts, like chess-pieces, some being kings, peasants, or knights, according to fate, talent, or birth, so, after a season, enters Death

upon the scene, and levels them all in the grave ; as we replace the chess equipment in its coffer."

"Well do I remember those words of the Don," said Lopez ; "and equally pat is honest Sancho's answer, that, however good the parallel, the idea was not so new but that he had heard it before. But Heaven pardon this our sin of trifling !"

"I was your favourite pupil, your strongest antagonist," remarked the duke, the words falling meaningless from his lips, as if he sought but to pass the time away.

"You were—you are !" cried the bishop, impatiently. "But again I say let us kneel in prayer, dear son."

And they knelt, the priest and the peer, before that humble crucifix ; and many were the words of Don Guzman's confession, hidden by the sacred seal of the church, deep in the torn soul of the weeping bishop. Ruy Lopez blessed the prisoner, and absolved his spirit from guilt, according to the holy Catholic rite. The last word appeared to have been spoken, and the solemn subject closed ; but an hour remained of the allotted time. The manner of the dying man was marked by dignity, divested of bravado.

"This delay is horrible !" cried the duke. "Wherefore do they tarry ? An eternity of torture drags its hideous length in every second of time ! The world and I have parted—would that all were over !" And Don Guzman strode rapidly across the cell, looking involuntarily upon the door continually, as if expecting to see it suddenly give way to the apparition of Calavar and his assistants, with all their frightful apparatus. The noble duke's firmness was evidently yielding to the agony of that awful soul-rack.

Now it happened, that Ruy Lopez, although a bishop,

was yet a man; and in man, the workings of nature go regularly on, like the wheels of a clock. The priest had recovered his own self-possession, yielding to that which he felt to be inevitable. He was struck with this last exclamation, so pitiable, of the duke, and marked the clammy death-sweat dropping from the victim's marble brow. Ruy Lopez heartily wished the scene over, for the sake of both, and a sudden thought gave vent to his own ruling passion. The hour was to be slain, before the man.

"If a game of chess, now, were not profane!" faltered forth the priest.

"A good thought!" cried Don Guzman, recalled again to earth, and braced once more to energy by the singularity of the proposition. "Clever bishop! dear confessor! a truly capital idea, and a most original conception! A farewell chess-party—a last Lopez Gambit! How can we better pass the time? But the chess-men, dear friend."

Ruy Lopez kindled like flame from gunpowder. He all but laughed outright.

"Pardon me, noble duke," said the bishop, "but my clerical gown always holds the weapons of war." And he produced a miniature chess equipage accordingly; drawing the two massive oaken settles to the table, and hastily setting up the pieces. "Our lady forgive me!" continued Ruy Lopez; "but I sometimes amuse myself with examining a chess position in the confessional."

"Many curious problems are doubtless solved there," retorted the prisoner, with a smile.

So the two grandees, spiritual and temporal, sat down to chess, and were speedily engaged in a game of remarkable interest. What a painter's theme were now that little cell! What a subject for the pencil of Rembrandt



or Salvator Rosa! The one narrow, confined window, with its lofty stream of sunlight pouring in full flood adown the manly features of Don Guzman, as if in mockery of God's own image, so soon to be blood-marked by cruel man. The chess-board,—the benevolent countenance of Ruy Lopez, now eagerly calculating his move, with every thought abstracted from earth, and confined to the chess position before him, and now that face bedewed with pity's tear, as its ken glanced unmarked upon the noble victim,—the muscular shiver at intervals thrilling fearfully through both peer and priest at the slightest coming of sound—ay, even at the beating of their own hearts! This last, I say, was not the least fearful feature of the scene.

As I have but now remarked, and as I in fact remark to myself every day of the week, and every hour of the day, human nature is a very curious sort of nature, and its workings are oftentimes most capriciously inexplicable. The varied emotions of our two chess-players presently ran into a different channel to what might have been perhaps expected. While in his tremor of spirit, Ruy Lopez played nearly a rook below his proper force; the intense excitement of the moment stimulated the pride of the Guzman, and appeared to endow him with preternatural skill. The high and generous blood of Old Castile responded to the call, and never had the duke played a game with such tremendous strength of purpose, such lucidity of calculation. The taper burns brightest as it flashes forth its last spark,—the song of the swan in death is ever most musical. The mind of the gallant noble appeared already to have disenthralled itself from earth, and to have become that purely spiritual essence, into which it was about to be resolved by steel and headsman. The duke

opened his game skilfully, dashed impetuously into attack, and acquired a position of all but certain victory. Ruy Lopez had not set his heart much upon the matter; how could he? and his best energies seemed now all unequal to meet the unwonted powers of the assault. Chess-players will understand this description. More and more complicated became the situation of the pieces, and never did fancy carve chess problem more scientifically intricate, than that into which our combatants had interwoven their battle array. The bishop buckled to work in earnest, and tasked his brain almost to bursting, for a mode of parrying the almost inevitable, though it might be remote, checkmate. Don Guzman, on his part, poured his soul into the fray with that glow of approaching conquest hardly appreciable in this our icy clime of the north; and never, never was chess enthusiasm more vividly developed. The world without was forgotten,—time and space no longer perceptibly existed. The universe was the chess-board—a life was in each move. Happy the delusion, could it but endure; but, alas! for the good and the brave, the minutes and the seconds were numbered. The door flew open, and the duke was startingly re-awakened from his dream, by the all too horrible reality which presented itself! The very beast of the desert can be more merciful than man.

With the lightning swiftness which marks the change of scene at a theatre, was the holy solitude of that peaceful chamber transformed into a very hall of hell. The stern Calavar was again upon his prey, backed by three dark ruffians with sword and torch, as if heaven's proper light was all unfit for the destroyer. A block, covered with black cloth, was wheeled suddenly forwards; and the short axe placed thereon told fearful tidings of

that which was to follow. In stern silence, as men used to labour in blood, did the satellites of the doomster fix their torches in the appointed niches, and strew the floor around with the dust of the cedar. All this was the work of a moment; life is but a breath of the nostril. Ruy Lopez sprang tremblingly to his feet, as Calavar advanced to the chess-table; but the duke stirred neither limb nor muscle, remaining in eager gaze fixed upon the board, caring not for the intrusion of man or fiend. Don Guzman had to move.

The workers of woe completed their preparations, and stood sullenly leaning upon their swords of office. Their gloomy chief laid his hand upon the duke's shoulder.

"Come!" croaked the husky Calavar. Oh! what fearful meaning can be conveyed in one poor word!

The prisoner started, as though serpent-bitten.

"Let me finish my game!" said Don Guzman, authoritatively.

"Impossible!"

"But I have won it, fellow! I have a certainly forced mate; I must play it out."

"Impossible!" repeated the dark one.

"Are the three hours really expired?" asked the Guzman.

"Their sand has run out. We are the king's servants, and we have a duty to perform!" And Calavar accordingly beckoned to his band, who advanced a few steps.

Now the duke was sitting in the recess under the one little window facing the portal, and both bishop and chess table were consequently placed between him and his appointed blood-spillers. Don Guzman raised his voice, and spoke haughtily, in the tone becoming one who succeeded to an ancestral line of twelve hundred years.

"This game to me, and my head to thee ; but until it be played out, I stir not. One short half-hour will give me victory."

"Duke, I respect thee," responded Calavar ; "but this may not be : my own life hangs in the balance. Come! "

Don Guzman drew from his fingers half-a-dozen gemmed rings of brilliants, and carelessly tossed them to the ruffians, as if to stay their thirst for gore. "I say I will finish the game," said he, calmly. The jewels lay peacefully untouched among the saw-dust, and the headsman looked at each other doubtingly.

"This is but trifling ; our orders are peremptory ! " cried Calavar, more impetuously. "Forgive me, noble duke, do you respect the will of your suzerain, or must we use force ? The bidding of the monarch shall be done ; the sentence of Spain's law must be executed ; leave then your seat in peace, prince, and ruffle not your last moments by unavailing opposition. Speak to the duke, reverend father, most holy bishop ! Bid Don Guzman bow to his fate."

The reply of Ruy Lopez was eager as unexpected. He snatched the curtal axe from off the billet, and waving it over his head, shouted, like the captain of a thousand men in battle :

"He shall finish the game, by God ! " cried the bishop.

Startled at the action accompanying these words, Calavar recoiled, and nearly fell down over his myrmidons. The scene may be imagined, better than described. Swords were presented, and the band were about to rush like wolves upon their prey. Ruy Lopez seemed transformed into Hercules. He dashed his heavy oaken stool upon the floor before his feet.

"The first man who passes bounds thus fixed by the church," said the bishop, "I cleave his impious skull. Up noble duke, up, and to the work! there are but four of the miscreants. I say your highness shall not be balked of your last wish, though it cost me life! And woe, ye villains! unutterable woe, to the wretch who shall dare to lay bloody hands upon a bishop of the church of Christ! Anathema Maranatha! Accursed be he, utterly and for ever. Cut off eternally from the faithful fold,—a leper here, a howling fiend hereafter. Lower your steel, bloodhounds, and respect the Lord's anointed!" And Ruy Lopez continued to pour forth, in a jargon of Latin and Spanish, one of those sublime forms of damnation, visited by his church upon the ex-communicated,—codes of cursing which so well entitle the pope of Rome to be hailed as the prince of bully-boys and rufflers.

The effect of our bishop's eloquence was splendidly emphatic. The men were awe-struck and tranquil, as if changed to stone. Even the sturdy Calavar felt that to slay a bishop of the church was not lightly to be thought of, without a more solemnly legal warrant.

"I go to the king," said Calavar.

"You may go to—Hades!" responded the bishop, in phrase of purest Doric.

What course remained for adoption? Calavar was in heart all averse to reporting these untoward matters to majesty. Philip was uncertain of mood, and was, besides, awaiting, like the daughter of Herodias, for her victim's head on a charger. To approach a wild animal at feeding time is ever dangerous. The chief executioner rapidly ran over the several chances. To butcher the duke and priest as they stood, was an undertaking not hastily to be entered

upon, however great the preponderance of force upon the side of the law. Ruy Lopez was a powerful man, and his blood was up. Don Guzman was unarmed, but desperate, and seemed amazingly to enjoy the idea of a battle. Prudence suggested the idea of temporizing, rather than at once rushing to extremity. Calavar was bidden to bear the duke's head to the foot of the throne, and felt a natural disinclination to mar his skilful carving. The time lost might be accounted for by a falsehood, and even were this impossible, the same half-hour would be equally consumed, if expended in a brutal and hazardous struggle. The Guzman had a large following; his friends at court were powerful; their vengeance was to be dreaded. Calavar resolved upon keeping the peace, and his decision was, in my humble opinion, both just and natural.

"Will you promise, really and truly, to finish this accursed game in half an hour, duke?" said Calavar, after a long pause.

"I will," answered Don Guzman.

"In the name of the devil, play on, then," replied the executioner.

The truce being thus perfected, the players resumed their seats, and were instantly reabsorbed in the conduct of their game. Calavar was himself a chess-player, and while he mentally anathematized both duke and prelate, by every saint in the calendar, was fain to make a virtue of necessity, and looked on with a face of flint. The varied attitudes of his followers, grouped as they were around the more interested party, were in strict accordance with the scene. The executioners seemed to form a wall of steel and muscle, dividing the doomed chess-player from earth utterly and for ever. Don Guzman glanced carelessly round,

and even at that sad moment his gallant spirit quailed not.

"Never played I chess in so goodly a presence before," said the duke, with a smile. "Bear witness, fellows, when I am gone, that once in my life, I mated Ruy Lopez!"\* and he addressed himself again to his task, with flushed features, lighted up yet by that cold, sad smile, like a sun-beam on Alpine snows.

The bishop made no comment aloud on this remark; but he kept fast hold of the trenchant axe, and scanned ever and anon the rugged features of the men around, as if longing in his heart for an opportunity to stir up the sleeping fray. "Were the duke and I," thought Ruy Lopez, "but sure of passage from this blood-stained tiger-den, by the sacred cross! I should think but little of braining the whole four of ye!"

And so went on their chess, and frightful was it to see the yet living dead await with such calm content the stroke of the slayer; fancy depicting the outlines of the scene constantly to Ruy Lopez through his many varied years of after-life,—death hovering the while on vulture wings above the group, eager to clutch his destined prey.

\* \* \* \*

But how passed the time during this interval in the halls

\* Seneca gives an anecdote of one Caius Julius, which I quote from Lodge's translation, 1614, presenting a curious parallel. Lodge, however, is wrong in assuming the game to have been chess; the Romans having been certainly ignorant of that sport; and the presumption is that it was a species of backgammon. "Hee was playenge at Chesse (*Ludebat latrunculis*) at such a time as the centurion who ledde a troope of condemned men to deathe commanded him likewise to be cited. Hauing scarce finished his game, he counted his men (*numeravit calculos*), and said to him with whom he played, *Beware saith he, when I am dead, that thou belyest me not, and sayest thou hast wonne the game.* Then, nodding his head to the centurion, following forth, he added, *Bear me wnesse, that I have the vantage of one.*"

of majesty? How fared it with the lord of the Escorial, while his most devoted servant was thus passing through his death agony? If the three hours had dragged out their coil but tardily in that dark tower where groaned imprisoned innocence, their waning in the court of Philip had been yet more tedious. Condemned by form to remain in standing posture, and forbidden under any pretence to quit the royal presence, the nobles of the court, many of them in complete armour, were, despite the hardy habits of the times, almost sinking with fatigue, as they forcedly made pretence of watching THE CHESS going on between the monarch and Don Ramirez, count of Biscay, a fine tall figure, but whose courtly and varnished smile at the present moment was hardly in keeping with the general aspect. De Tarraxas, with half-closed eyes, stood still, as the rock of Calpe; resembling rather one of those gigantic suits of steel one sees in Gothic halls, than a man of real bone and blood.

The youthful Alonzo d'Ossuna, wanting the iron frame of the lord high constable, and palsied with heart-sickness at the cruel fate of him he had loved so well—his leader in war, his model of every great quality which may adorn a man—D'Ossuna (my legend runs) leaned against a marble pillar in a most pitiable state of depression, like a flower-stalk snapped asunder by the cutting tempest of the east. Suddenly Philip started up, and began to pace the floor again with unequal steps, as at the commencement of our chapter, at times pausing to catch the most distant echo of sound, at others turning and watching the sand-glass which marked the passing flight of day. All was silent as the chamber of Azrael, the angel of death; for none present, however high in rank, dared break in upon their



ruler's iron command. In accordance with the gloomy superstition of the age, Philip would occasionally address a brief and muttered prayer to the jewelled figure of Mary-mother, which stood forth in ostentatious relief, upon a pedestal of porphyry taken from the ruins of the Alhambra. Bowing his head to the dust, and crossing repeatedly brow and breast, did Spain's king thus humble himself, as if to deprecate the anger of the Virgin, and to bid her bless his deed of blood. Neither bread nor meat were broken, neither wine nor water were borne to the lip; but the stillness of the great desert of Zahara reigned over and upon the hour, even until the last grain of sand in the glass had run out its race, and the cruel measure of time was full. Philip was then satisfied. He threw himself upon a couch. "The traitor dies!" ejaculated the king. An audible murmur ran round in response. "The time has expired some minutes!" continued the king; "and your enemy, Count of Biscay, has passed with it away, like the leaves of the olive before the blast of the sirocco!"

"My enemy, sire!" replied Don Ramirez, with some affectation of surprise.

"Yes, man!" said Philip, almost maliciously. "Why echo our words? Were you not his rival in the affections of the Lady Estella; and can two claim the same bride, and be friends? True, hitherto we have not spoken in council upon this matter; but our royal word is pledged, and the maid and her vast possessions are yours. Oh, count! men may talk of the ingratitude of kings, but never can we forget the services of that real friend to Spain, who first discovered the treasonable correspondence with France of this our pampered minion, the ingrate Guzman!"

It seemed that Biscay's count could have spared this premature declaration of his devotedness. Shame is ever the informer's portion, gild it as he may.

"With deep reluctance was my sad duty to your majesty performed," was the answer of Don Ramirez; but he faltered in accent as he spoke, feeling that although he looked not in the faces of the chiefs around, their general expression was aught but friendly. A pause ensued. Tarraxas coughed audibly, while the hot blood of D'Ossuna rekindled in his veins at the words just spoken. The sensation was unbearable. Alonzo struck his sheathed sword with his gauntlet, as he sought in vain to catch the eye of Don Ramirez.

"Before the betrothed of my murdered friend shall be the bride of this proud man," thought the youth, "will I also lie in the Guzman tomb! To-morrow be my day of reckoning."

The conversation was resumed by Spain:—

"Your zeal, Don Ramirez, shall not pass unrequited. The saviour of a throne, and it may be of our dynasty, must be rewarded in no vulgar manner. At early morn we bade you arrange with our heralds-in-chief the patent of creation to the rank of Duke and Governor of fair Valencia. Is the parchment yet ready for signature?"

Trembling with the full tide of emotions consequent upon the complete success of long-cherished aspirations—agitated with the natural feelings of gratified ambition—eagerly grasping at the prizes of beauty, wealth, and rank, now poured around him—Don Ramirez hurriedly drew from his vest a vellum scroll, and presented it reverentially to the king.

"To sign this," said Philip, taking the roll with an air of mingled grace and majesty—"to subscribe this patent

be our first public act to-day. The headsman has long since dealt the traitor his meed, and no other moment of time can be so fitting in which to reward the faithful saviour of our crown and life ;” and the king displayed the parchment. “Ha!” cried Philip, suddenly and impetuously ; “Mother of Jesus ! what have we here ?”

\* \* \* \* \*

Again the legend carries us to the cell of the doomed. That fearful chess-game is over at last. Don Guzman has checkmated Ruy Lopez, and his awful triumph is perfected. The Duke rises from his seat.

“I am once more the devoted servant of my king,” said the condemned prince to Calavar, in accents of dignity, and it might be pride.

The executioners prepared rapidly to work forth their calling. Billet and blade were speedily made ready. The preparations were completed. The duke advanced to the altar of sacrifice, with that profound air of tranquillity only to be based on conscious innocence within.

“Let not this act of rashness be visited as guilt upon my king, O God !” prayed the Guzman, audibly. Ruy Lopez prostrated himself in a corner of the chamber, and with his face wrapped in his robes, poured forth almost hysterically the service of the church for the dying and the dead. The unhappy bishop could not bear to look upon innocent blood shed abroad as water.

Calavar laid his rough hand upon the duke’s shoulder, in order to remove the ruff from his neck. Don Guzman drew back gravely.

“No part of thee or thine may touch a Guzman, saving that steel !” said the duke, as he himself tore off the impediment, and bared his finely moulded throat for the blow.

Don Guzman, we say, reclined his head upon the billet, and gave the word to strike; but a shout like the coming of a mighty band of warriors rang through the distant halls, and the door was dashed open, ere the thirsty axe could drink its draught. At the head of many nobles, D'Ossuna rushed in and threw himself upon the rescued duke, while the narrow cell thrilled with the loud hurrah of Don Tarraxas.

"The noble and the innocent!" cried the young Alonzo. "He lives, and he is saved! My own loved cousin! I durst not hope to find thy spirit yet on earth!"

"But just in time, dear boy," whispered the duke, as he swooned away upon the block. Death could be better borne by that bold heart, than the consciousness of life and honourable acquittal!

Ruy Lopez lifted the noble Guzman exultingly in his arms, and the duke recovered sense but to find himself in the hall of majesty, his friends warmly crowding around; and Philip himself hanging over the couch, with an eager expression of delight and satisfaction.

To dwell on the close of this scene were tedious as unnecessary. Don Ramirez, in his agitated triumph, had given a wrong parchment to the king, and its contents proved the forgeries and treasons of its owner. The whole exposed a plot to remove the Guzman; and thereby not only weaken the chief defences of the throne, but extinguish for ever a most hated rival. Sickening were it in the moment of joy to dwell on this in more minute detail. The duke's innocence was completely proved, and formally proclaimed in loudest tones by the high constable. Calavar and his gloomy band were first recalled from their stupefaction and bewilderment, to consign the black-

hearted Count of Biscay to the Guzman's late keep of stone, and three days afterwards Madrid witnessed the traitor's well-deserved death on the public scaffold.

The joy of the court, meanwhile, knew no bounds. The noble Guzman was overwhelmed with embraces and congratulations; and the passages of the critical chess-game were minutely and even superstitiously dwelt upon.

"My friend once more!" cried Philip. "How could I be so blind, so hasty, so ungrateful to thy long and tried services! Never may my folly be expiated!"

"Sire," replied the duke, "name it not again. Such words of kindness from my sovereign outweigh a thousand lives!"

The king took the arm of Don Guzman.

"Friend," said Philip, "be thou very sure we may not be thus twice unjust. The finger of God is marked in this matter, and his interposition has been indeed miraculous. To offer thee additional rank or wealth were vain, and would be an insult to thy pure soul of honour. To hand down to thy posterity this providential escape, it is our royal will that the Guzman shield do henceforth bear a bright axe argent, on a chess-field azure; and be it our duty to provide that thy nuptials with the fair Donna Estella be held with fitting pomp and splendour, within the month, in the halls of our own Escorial here. Jesu Maria, assoilzie our soul from the sin of blood so nearly laid upon us!"

The monarch crossed himself in silence, and turned to Ruy Lopez. Gloomy and bad as was unhappily Philip's general deportment, there were not wanting moments through life, in which the virtuous principle strove success-

fully for the ascendancy. None are all good, and surely of men none are altogether wicked. We are fearfully fashioned.

"Ruy Lopez," said Philip, with a smile, "methinks the church of Spain has gained a stalwart defender in her new bishop. Thou shalt be consecrated lord-prelate in a jewelled robe, for the chess-game thou hast this day played!"

"May it please your Majesty," replied Ruy Lopez, "never before felt I joy at receiving checkmate."

The king laughed, and of course the courtiers all laughed too. The humor of the moment was to make mirth at but little. Their hearts were full.

"And now, gentlemen, we bid ye forthwith to the banquet," resumed the monarch. "Of all Spain's kings, never had she one so famished for food as Philip at this present happy moment. Let the cover for our noble friend Don Guzman, be placed at our own right hand, and be the trusty Bishop of Segovia seated on our left. To dinner, to dinner, and that right speedily! Your arm, my Guzman!"

\* \* \* \* \*

And thus did chess save an innocent man, and thus did Ruy Lopez get his bishoprick. Doubtless was it meant as a retrospect of this event, that Ruy Lopez, subsequently in his *Treatise on Chess*, printed in Alcala, 1561, heads his second chapter with these words:—"En que se trata el juego e ocio loable, no solo permitirse, pero ser necesario para la conservacio dela vida humana." Can enthusiasm go farther? and are not all real chess-players enthusiasts, from the very nature and constitution of our noble and bewitching pastime?

# MATED AND CHECK-MATED.

## AN ORIENTAL SKETCH.

### CHAPTER I.

"I will presently tell you a story to make your wine relish. Drink then; and so to the purpose. \* \* \* Though you believe it not, I care not much. But an honest man, and of good judgment, believeth still what is told him, and that which he finds written."

RABELAIS.

A TALE of the times of old,—a passage of the reign of the Shah Jehan, recorded in the chronicles of Persia.

The hour of early evening prayer had long since passed, and darkness came down like a cloak upon the royal city of Ispahan. The caravansaries and bazaars had been closed some time; the coffee-houses were shut up; the mosques deserted; and the solitary lamp, glimmering here and there like a star upon the lofty minarets, had disappeared. The hum of that mighty ant-nest had sunk into the low murmur preceding the utter stillness of the city's night-rest. No life was in the streets, save an occasional passenger, in the chief thoroughfares, creeping cautiously homeward from his evening revel, with a few stray dogs scouring the stones of their offal. The guard had just finished making its round, and now came to report to the chief station at the Tehran gate that, thanks to Allah and the Shah Jehan, all was peace and safety in Persia's capital.

The commander of the watch this night was Ali Mohammed, a smart young officer of the royal guard, as careless of principle, beyond the strict letter of duty, as most other Persians. In his splendid military accoutrements, he was now lounging in the guard-house with three or four other equally wild spirits, throwing dice, and at intervals passing round a vessel of some sort of drink much resembling wine of Schiraz, to judge from the gusto with which each man bathed his moustache by turns in the pitcher. The keys of the outer gate of Ispahan lay before Ali Mohammed, as denoting that upon this occasion he was chief in command. Some half-dozen torches of yellow wax lighted the interior, and a party of soldiers stood around, gazing attentively, but not daring to break in upon the conversation of their superiors.

"May I be your sacrifice!" said a young gholaum of the troop; "but this week's watch is ill requited. No fish come to net. I drink to better times."

"True, boy," replied Ali Mohammed; "too true. Time was, when a night on guard to the head officer was worth gold upon gold; but now, none wish to leave the city ere cock-crow, beyond some fantastical dervise without money in his purse, or beggarly hadji on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Korm. May their marrow be dried up!" And Ali Mohammed took a lusty pull at the jug. As he spoke, a deep-toned voice outside asked for egress at the Tehran gate; and the party pricked up their ears like sportsmen when they hear the footfall of an antelope.

The stranger was introduced, and confronted the commander of the post; who, with an air of careless haughtiness glanced at him from head to foot, treating with supercilious indifference his renewed demand to be permitted



to go forth from Ispahan. The new-comer was a powerfully formed, fine young man, verging upon thirty; and his free step and bearing denoted a life passed in active and hardy pursuits. On his head was the common black cap of the Astracan lamb's wool, and his person was wholly enveloped in a heavy cloak of coarse blue cloth.

"And whither are ye bound, O friend of light brains?" asked Ali Mohammed, throwing the dice. "Why go forth at this late hour, from beneath the shadow of the king of kings?"

"My business is my own," replied the stranger calmly. "I go to the camp without the walls, and I also am in the service of the Shah, on whom be blessings!"

"Some robber of the desert," whispered the young gholaum to his chief. "Give thy people the word, O my soul! and let us strip him." In truth, the soldiers looked upon the stranger with the eyes of hungry wolves; evidently regarding him as a waif, stray, or windfall, to be converted, according to law and precedent, to their own especial property.

"No man leaves Ispahan this night by the Tehran gate without a pass," drawled out Ali Mohammed. "What is thy name, O dark one?"

The stranger's lip curled at the impertinent tone of the query, and he appeared with difficulty to suppress his feelings.

"I repeat that I am of the army, though, it may be, the least of the servants of the Shah. Delay me at your peril!"

"Oh! then you belong to that advanced detachment of the troops without the city, returned but now from dealing with those sons of Jehanum who worship fire on the rocky mountains. Be their graves accursed! If a soldier, you

know military law. You may have stabbed some one in the city, and I am responsible to the shadow of the universe. Inshallah! why should I not, too, speak of the rule of the guard? These poor men will have red gold ere they unclothe the gates,—aye, and search thy person, lest thou bear treason forth."

The stranger thrilled with passion. He half unclosed his cloak, displaying beneath, the uniform of a subaltern officer, and wearing in his sash a short but very heavy sword, beside which reposed a long straight handjar of Damascus steel, bearing on its hilt a large sparkling brilliant, curiously carved. He handed this dagger to Ali Mohammed, saying,—

"On the Shah's secret service! Let me pass!" And he returned the handjar to its sheath.

"By the head and the eye, pass!" cried Ali Mohammed, with an expression of the deepest respect; casting a look anxiously at the same time upon the dice, and the flasks of grape-juice.

The stranger marked his deprecatory glance.

"I am a soldier," said he, with a smile, turning to go; "and I tell no tales of my brethren. Peace be around ye!"

"Why is not the gate opened, O sons of dogs!" roared Ali Mohammed, as the portals were hastily flung apart. The stranger passed without the wall of Ispahan, and the commander of the watch remained watching his receding form till lost in night. He then relieved his breast with a deep sigh of mystery and astonishment, and replaced himself among his party.

"Tell us, by Allah! who was that?" asked the young gholauum eagerly; while the soldiers, disappointed of their expected prey, looked like leopards robbed of a meal.

"Mashallah! who is that, O inconsiderate of speech?" was the response. "God is great, and so is Ali Mohammed when on command; and he biddeth thee, boy, to hold thy tongue, and pass the pitcher!"

And so the revelry went on the live long night in that happy guardhouse; we ourselves quitting Ispahan by the Tehran gate, in company with the unknown wanderer.

The stranger proceeded upon his silent path, with the same air of unconcern as though five hundred men had formed his escort, although alone in the darkness, beneath the walls of a city famous for those midnight plunderers who, dwelling mostly in the adjacent tombs, come forth to work in their calling at fitting season. The night was warm; the air balmy as the zephyrs wafted from the rose fields of Georgia; and the plaintive cry of the distant jackal came upon the wind like the moan of a wailing spirit. Our wanderer appeared to be deeply lost in thought, and passing through an avenue of lofty cedars, struck into that path which, winding among the gardens and villas of the suburbs, would conduct him by the nearest way to the camp.

"Yes, I was right in my resolve" (so ran the current of the stranger's thoughts). "The voice of Persia can only be fairly heard in her public places,—in her khans, her baths, her coffee-houses, her streets and shops; and I will hear what she there says in her wild free speech. Mine own ears shall listen, mine own eyes shall behold; and thus shall the truth be known as to the feeling of this mighty people for the plans of their rulers. Yes; by the tombs of my race, it is alone worthy of a free man to act by himself. The army arrives not yet for three days; during that time at least then, I continue to look on Ispahan in hidden form. Yesterday a mirza,—to night a soldier,—to-morrow,

it may be a merchant. By Allah! Nourjehan,\* thou art playing a strange part! My life has been latterly almost wholly passed with the armies of the shah, on whom be blessings! None hardly, therefore, can recognise me in the capital. All without the realm is at peace. The Kurd and the Fireworshipper humbled to the very dust,—the bow of the Arab broken,—the lance of the Turcoman shivered. Persia is white in the eyes of Frangistan and India. The day of arms is passed; let the people have rest and quiet. The throne of the shah is strengthened for his line, and the arts of peace be it now mine to cultivate. Tired am I, O prophet, of blood! confirm, then, my present determination. Yes; well saith the sage, ‘it is better to build up one cottage, than to burn a hundred palaces.’ To war I go no more, unless the peace of the realm demand it. Too much time have I already passed under the camel-skin tent of the soldier,—too little have I devoted to the study of the laws between man and man as laid down in our blessed Koran, and the writings of the wise and virtuous. Be my future path that of the sage and the philosopher. Hollow and unsound are the glories of military conquest. Away with that dream for ever! Mighty destinies are before me; and if life be spared, I swear —— but, ha! what have we here?”

An antique portico leading to a garden had caught the eye of the midnight-wanderer; the latticed gate itself swinging invitingly open, a most unusual thing in the suburbs of Ispahan. The bright eastern moon had risen in its splendour, and its rays fell pleasingly upon the tufted shrubbery. Nourjehan involuntarily paused, and looked

\* Nourjehan signifies “light of the world.”

within upon the garden. The murmur of a full-flowing fountain caught his ear, and the odours of the varied parterres of shrubs and flowers chained him momentarily to the spot. Nourjehan was young, and his heart beat high with an undefinable feeling, resembling the romance of the chivalrous days of the west. He stepped lightly over the tempting entrance, and stood within the portico.

The garden was small, but picturesque as fairy-land. Shrubs of every variety, trees of every foliage, were grouped in fanciful masses. There were the tamarind and the tulip, the myrtle and the cystus, the laurel and the jessamine, mingled with the rose, the heliotrope, and the cypress, in tufts of impenetrable obscurity. The spot appeared as though sacred to beauty and to peace; and the world beyond was a void. Nourjehan advanced with the caution of a practised warrior, and sighed as he contrasted that graceful scene with the blood-dyed plains of what men term victory. A silvery light, like the twinkling of a newly born planet, shone through a clump of richly scented almond trees; and, yielding to the unaccountable caprice of the moment, our wanderer yet further followed the mysterious beckonings of the finger of destiny. He found the light proceeded from a latticed apartment on the basement of a small house, the jalousies of which, shaded partly with drapery, were thrown widely open to court the cooling breeze. Nourjehan stepped upon the brink of a marble fountain, whose waters played "soft as lovers' sighs;" encircled by myriad clusters of golden orange-blossoms, and his bold eye was enabled to penetrate to the interior of the chamber. The scene within transfixed him to the spot as if by enchantment.

Seated upon piles of silken cushions, placed for the sake

of the air near the window, an aged man and youthful maiden were playing chess ; while a female slave watched the progress of the game from a distant corner, with her arms crossed on her breast. The apartment was lighted by several old-fashioned silver cressets, and its walls were curiously ornamented in arabesque. Vases of porcelain containing cut blossoms of the rarest flowers added their odours to the fragrance of the garden, and perfumed the atmosphere so as to be hardly endurable by aught but an Oriental. The whole interior denoted the graceful taste of the possessors of the dwelling, while a certain plainness in its decorations spoke of moderate habits rather than of great wealth. The windows were open to the ground, and the bubbling of the fountain had contributed to render the advance of Nourjehan unheard. The tenants of the chamber demand an especial paragraph.

The aged man's countenance beamed with that expression of patriarchal affection which instantly denoted that he was the parent of the fair being before him. His beard and hair were as white as snow, his features regular and placid, his brow high and wide. His whole look was that of a venerable sage, teaching philosophy to one of his most chosen neophytes. A warm hearted smile played on his lip, as he pored earnestly over the chess-board.

The beautiful being—for beautiful she was—who contended with the elder in the mimic war, struck Nourjehan at once as something superior to all he had ever looked on. The long dark auburn hair hanging, after the Persian fashion, in two enormous curls upon her bosom—the delicately pencilled eyebrows, meeting in the centre,—the long kohl-stained lashes,—the pearly teeth,—the transparent skin,—all these charms were here united in the rarest degree of

loveliness. The taper fingers of the maid, betipt with henna, hovered over the chess-board, fancied Nourjehan, like the angels of delight when they visit the pining heart of the captive. Her veil was quite thrown back, in the privacy of the *anderun*, so that our loiterer's gaze fell deep and enduring. He could only liken the fair form of the maid to some celestial essence; and held his breath lest the slightest sound should break the spell, and resolve the *peri* back into her native element of air. The dress of the lady was chiefly of shawls, disposed with elegance around her finely moulded form.

A quarter of an hour flew by like a moment: Nourjehan was chained to the marble fount by which he rested. The players conducted their chess with a placid earnestness which betokened skill. Nourjehan was himself a passionate admirer of the game, and this gave a feature of additional interest to the scene. Not a word had yet been uttered by either of the two high belligerent powers; but the coral lips of the bright-eyed beauty at length parted in gentle speech. The tones of her voice were sweetly musical, and with a deep sigh the heart of the excited Nourjehan surrendered itself for ever captive.

"Thy chess is in great force to night, O my father! Well was the word spoken but yesterday of thy skill by the learned Mirza, Eben-Timuri."

"And what was that word, O flatterer?"

"The talk ran, my father, upon the gardens of the Mirza, with their roses and running waters; and Eben-Timuri made answer and said, 'truly the garden is beautiful; but Al-Suli's game of chess is yet more beautiful.'"\*

\* In Dr. Hyde, *De Ludis Orientalibus*, we find this saying recorded as having been actually applied to the skilful chess play of Al-Suli.

Al-Suli laughed with complacency at his daughter's sally. Nourjehan recognised the name as being that of the first chess-player in Persia; though personally unacquainted with him, himself, our eaves-dropper having been so long absent from the royal city, and Al-Suli having but recently come from Meshed to reside in Ispahan. After a pause, the conversation was renewed, as a sort of running accompaniment to the game in progress.

"Yes, my loved Zelica, great is my skill, and the day of my brightest hope is dawning. The army of Persia returns in triumph; and the son of our shah, on whom be reverence as there is glory, will doubtless deign to measure himself in chess with the aged Al-Suli."

"Does the prince play well, then, O my father?"

"According to report he does; and that, notwithstanding the lying spirit of flattery, which so darkly veileth truth from kings. The prince is wise and learned; may his shadow never be less! I checkmate thee, O my child!"

"Pardon, dear father, my sense is dim. The night wears, and the midnight hour of prayer is close at hand." And Zelica hung pensively over the now tranquil chess-field.

"Thou art sick in health, I fear, if not in heart, O my daughter! Dull is our solitude for thy trusting and hoping youth. I doubt me thou sighest for a household to govern, more exclusively thy own, O my fair lady Banou!"

"Not so, O my parent!" answered Zelica, blushing.

"Yet such is nature, and often do I regret I have not earlier wedded thee; but I have sworn by the Caaba that none may take thee from me but a fine chess-player, and the vow of a father for his child is a holy thing in the sight of Allah"



"All men, but thee, to Zelica are naught; and this thou knowest, O my father. With my birds and flowers, how tranquilly floweth life."

"Tranquilly, it may be; but the heart echoeth back stronger words, I fear, in secret. Well, God is great; and what is written to be, is written! Chess may yet give me a son; and thee, girl, a spouse."

Hardly could Nourjehan forbear challenging the old man to encounter him in chess upon the spot. In one half hour he had loved away his life. The cold west cannot appreciate or understand the feelings of the east in this respect; since it is fairly on record, that men in Persia and Arabia have fallen dotingly in love with the mere impress of a woman's fingers on the wall—nay, have sat down and died for the feelings thus germinated. A strange heart is that of man! Nourjehan felt a profound conviction that his future happiness was for ever inextricably bound up with the fate of the lovely being before him. Their acquaintance seemed already to have been of twenty years duration. Nourjehan was fascinated like the gazelle before the bright eye of the mountain panther. His breast throbbed with the most intense and painful emotions, and it was only by a mighty effort at self-command, that he was enabled to overcome the strong temptation to go forward and speak. "But she shall learn to love me for myself," thought he, "and shall know me but as that which I appear to be. Allah guide me! To win her affections do I devote my life!"

"That cow of a Moollah, Reza Hafed," said the father, "who wanted thee, girl, for his nephew! Ha, ha! they fancied they could play chess, and the moollah tore his beard when I conquered him. Never shall he cross my

threshold again. Was the youth aught to thee ? By thy soul, speak !”

The maiden laughed.

“ I esteemed nephew and uncle alike, and loved each very little. The camel hath more sense than the elder, and the wild ass more discretion than the younger. Thou little knowest Zelica, O my father, if thou thinkest she could give her heart to a fool !”

Nourjehan was entranced. “ To the charms of Paradise,” sighed he, “ she unites the wisdom of Lokman !” How partial are the eyes of love : and Nourjehan was already a lover,—jealous, ardent, and passionately attached to his mistress.

“ Has the Ethiopian barred gate and portal ?” demanded Al-Suli, abruptly, of the female domestic.

“ He has, O our master, some two hours back.”

“ Jehanum yawns for the liar !” muttered Nourjehan.

“ And that officer of the shah,” continued Al-Suli, “ has he dared to pollute the sacredness of my harem, by hovering about its vicinity this day as yesterday ? The blessed Allah blacken his face, and defile his mother’s grave !”

“ We have not again seen that man of impudence, O my lord,” responded the slave, Miriam.

“ Thou sayest, Zelica, that he looked but upon thy hand as thou wert tending thy flowers ? Strange boldness to dare thus to intrude upon so slight a warrant !”

“ I speak the truth, O my father. The man made signs from a distance, and attempted to give Miriam gold and a letter ; but I care not for manners so over-bold, and dismiss him with the moollah’s nephew—beasts of the hoof both. The ass might be their father and mother !”

"By the shah's salt," murmured Nourjehan, "I may live to take that insolent king's officer by the throat!"

A low creeping sound, as if advancing from a distance caught the soldier's ear at this moment: although so faint was its approach, none could have heard it but an experienced warrior.

Nourjehan turned towards the garden entrance; and, to his surprise, beheld a group of horses and men, faintly marked in outline upon the dusky firmament above, and evidently formed without the gate. Even as he looked, half-a-dozen dark forms entered the garden, and cautiously approached the dwelling. His quick apprehension saw that violence was on foot, and also suggested the necessity of repressing his first strong impulse to alarm the unsuspecting father and daughter; who, unconscious of danger, were still in conversation. The intruders advanced with noiseless step; and the whole might have seemed, from its suddenness, a dream.

But Nourjehan was no dreamer. His person was concealed by the trunk of a hugh olive, and his sight and hearing were strained to the uttermost to watch the event. The men reached the house at an angle slightly remote from the latticed anderun; and placing one of their party as sentinel, the others entered at a small door, which opened to them as if by magic. It was too dark to see very distinctly, but the new-comers were evidently armed to the teeth.

"Foul treason is here," thought Nourjehan,— "treason against the maiden and her sire; and if I alarm them at this moment, it may cost their lives. Wolves, and sons of wolves, some of ye pay dearly for this outrage!" His heavy sword was drawn, and his cloak already swung from

his shoulders, and bound, buckler-like, about his left arm. The gallant soldier then drew his cap low upon his brow, and stood prepared to dash in through the open lattice. "A strange feeling this of mine for the maid: well is it that I too was watching."

Sharp screams rent the air—shadows darkened the lower windows—a rush was made by heavy feet—the struggle was perceptible. The long-drawn heart-cry of Zelica yet rung upon the night, when Nourjehan bounded lightly through the open lattice upon the scene within. It was time.

Two of the ruffians had seized Al-Suli, and were binding his limbs with leathern thongs. The female slave was grasped by a powerful Arnaout, in readiness to be borne away. Nourjehan's headlong spring cast him upon the Arnaout, who fell at the same time a corpse, cloven through skull and turban. The coming of our hero was as the coming of Azrael, the angel of death, and his sword fell like the blinding lightning. He uttered no word, but threw himself bodily upon the ruffians, and his blade drank blood at every sweep. The lady Zelica was in the hands of men who were hurriedly twisting her veil around her head, as if to stop her cries. Two of these marauders raised their weapons in astonishment at the rescue; but the one was cut down by the next sword-stroke of Nourjehan, while the other was sent staggering against the wall by a blow of our soldier's heavy left hand. The chief of the party dropped the fainting Zelica from his grasp, and turned like the tiger balked of his prey. All was the work of a moment. Nourjehan darted upon his foe in a state of now ungovernable excitement, shouting the Persian war-cry of "slay, slay!" His opponent recognised

his voice and features ; and, throwing down his sword, advanced his neck, in the muteness of despair, to abide the coming blow. Nourjehan stayed the force of that blade which seldom struck twice.

“ Ismael Khan, by the holy of holies ! say, before I smite, can it be thou, ruffian and plunderer ? The shah’s best soldier turned bandit ! Oh, shame ! What meaneth this ? ”

At the sound of that voice every weapon suddenly dropped, and all was hushed as the silent grave. Every man present stood abashed and cowering. The light revealed the dress and accoutrements of the royal troops. Nourjehan glanced fiercely around. Twice he raised his falchion to plunge it into the khan’s bosom, and twice he stayed the death stroke.

“ The lion wars not with the hound ! ” cried Nourjehan, as turning contemptuously away, he flew to raise the insensible form of Zelica. Ismael Khan remained motionless as a statue. His men unbound Al-Suli, and released the slave. Zelica recovered from her swoon to find herself in the arms of her preserver, who was hanging over her with an expression of fond and respectful devotion.

Quick as thought, Nourjehan signed to Al-Suli and the female domestic ; and, exchanging a few brief words, the lady was borne by them from the chamber of blood, which now rather resembled a battle-field, than the heaven of peace it had so recently represented. Nourjehan addressed Ismael Khan once more.

“ On your life, man, speak ! ” said he, “ and make this darkness light. Give me not many words, but give me truth. ”

“ I am your sacrifice, ” faltered forth the khan, a tall

majestic-looking soldier in splendid attire. "On my eyes be obedience. The girl pleased thy servant, and he wished to have her. What need of words? The dark slave without, took gold and opened to us. I would have carried the women to the camp, and left the old man here. Thy servant has spoken. What harm?"

Nourjehan was anxious to put an end to the scene.

"Take thy life, Ismael Khan, thou hast twice saved mine in battle; but henceforth thy head answers for the safety of this dwelling. Carry the false Ethiop without, and strangle him in the garden. Two of these fellows are dead. Bear off the three bodies, and cast them forth on the sands of the camp for the jackal and the vulture. Let the waters of the fountain yonder remove the pollutions of this room, and that on the instant; after which depart to your dwellings with the silence of ghouls returning to the tomb. And mark me, men! you know my mood; if any one babble of this, he dies the death. On the blood of thee and of thine be this matter, Khan!"

"Thy servant hears and obeys," was the khan's answer, with a profound inclination of the head. The orders of Nourjehan were responded to with military promptitude. The unfaithful male slave was strangled—the floor was cleansed of its gore—the dead and dying were removed, and the midnight intruders vanished from the scene with the silent gladness of men delighted to escape with their heads on their shoulders. All was once more profoundly still. Nourjehan was alone. Al-Suli and Zelica again appeared, trembling and agitated as birds when the falcon swoops on the dove-cot. They doubted the reality even of life, and could hardly look on the events of the last half hour save as the wild incidents of a fearful vision.

Nourjehan whispered the words of peace and safety, and their bewildered senses slowly recognised their salvation of life and honour at his hands. There are moments of feeling which the pen cannot trace. The chess-master and his daughter asked no questions; they knew not, they recked not, who or what was their preserver; but their hearts yearned to him as to their Maker. By a mighty effort, Al-Suli spoke:—

“Be to me,” said he, “henceforth a son, as thou hast been to her—to my Zelica—as a brother. Visit us early and late, morning and evening. Come to look upon our gratitude. Remove thy veil, O my daughter, and bid God, on whom be glory, bless thy valiant saviour. Verily the young man hath shewn this night the force of Rustam, and the courage of Antar; and the mighty keeping of Allah be upon him for ever!”

The trembling Zelica raised her veil, and seizing the hands of Nourjehan, pressed them eagerly to her lips and bosom. During the brief moment of this caress, it seemed to our hero that he had already crossed the bridge of death, and entered upon the abode of the celestial houris, created by Mohammed for true believers.

“O my father!—my sister!” murmured Nourjehan, with the timidity of a fawn; “let thy son—thy brother—beg a boon, if he have in truth found favour. When I visit ye on the morrow, and if it may be granted on the next morrow also, give me indeed the privilege of a brother to look upon my sister face to face; and blessed be the God of Persia who hath made me now his humble instrument of succour and of health!”

Nourjehan left the house of Al-Suli, and sought his

tent with the encampment of the army's advanced guard. The dew of sleep dwelt not that night upon his eyes; for body and soul were sundered, and his spirit rested with the lady chess-player.

---

## CHAPTER II.

Generations of man change, but the seasons change not. Nations and dynasties roll away, but light and darkness endure in regular alternation. Nourjehan arose from his tented couch at morning, and felt almost surprised to see the sun shining with the same look he had borne yesterday. To him all things seemed altered, and the very atmosphere unlike that he had hitherto breathed. The Promethean spark had lighted up his heart, and he abandoned himself to his new feelings, with the true enthusiasm of a son of Iran.

It need hardly be said that this day, and the next, and many more "next" days saw Nourjehan worshipping at the shrine of his adoration. He represented himself to be an officer in the service of the shah, endowed for the time with a commission of particular consequence, which had given him that marked ascendancy over Ismael Khan and his lawless troop. The grand army had entered Ispahan in triumph, and the emperor had offered up public thanksgivings, in the chief mosques, for the happy state of general peace in which Persia rested beneath his rule.

The ostensible reason of Nourjehan's daily visits at the dwelling of Al-Suli was, of course, chess—immortal chess; of which science he declared himself a perfect adorer, and



prayed for the help of the great master to perfect him yet more in its philosophic mysteries. Al-Suli was delighted to prove his gratitude in the only way open to him, and found his new pupil as docile as intellectual. Nourjehan developed profound skill in chess; and, to the astonishment of the veteran, displayed combinations nearly as skilful as his own. In truth never had Al-Suli met with so fine a player, and the greater was the old man's joy to receive his diurnal visitor. Innumerable were the battles of the contending champions together; while the form of the fair Zelica was not wanting to grace the scene, and hymn the victor's song of triumph on the lute. Thus sweetly enthralled, weeks fled like days, and Nourjehan more and more gave himself up, the slave of love, as he found the charms of the maiden were the least of her perfections, compared with the mental qualities with which she was so surpassingly gifted. Nourjehan did not deny that he had practised chess for years, and had prided himself on his skill, now first proved not invincible. On the whole, Al-Suli mostly came off as victor; but was forced to confess he had never been so hardly pushed, and it seemed as if his affection for his gallant adversary increased in proportion to the stubborn tenacity with which he maintained the chess encounter. It must be owned, that had Zelica invariably kept her veil down, the chances of victory had been greater for Nourjehan. But who can look on "bright eyes beaming," and maintain that stoicism so essential to the gathering and wreathing of chess-laurels?

A month had passed in this manner, and our party were one sunny morning employed as usual; Nourjehan, now domiciled as a son indeed, playing chess with Al Sul,

while the fair Zelica arranged her graceful vases of shining flowers, fed her birds, struck the chords of her lyre ; and, looking at intervals over the chess array, exchanged a timid glance blushing with her preserver, which spoke fully of congenial feelings to the youth's enraptured heart.

"Yes, my friend," broke forth Ali-Suli, as if thinking aloud,—“yes, in chess alone man finds endless recreation and comfort in every condition of life. Chess teaches him how to shun the snare of the tempter—how to steel his heart against the wiles of the crafty in guile. Chess is the oil, and the balm, and the wine of human existence. Chess gladdens the heart of the lowly, for he feels there is one possession of which the tyrant cannot bereave him. Chess humbleth the mighty, and breaketh his pride, like the brittle spear in the day of battle. Chess, like death, levels all before it, and reminds even the shah upon his gilded throne, that he moves upon the same board of action as the humble peasant or pawn.”

“Belli! Well spoken, O my father!” answered Nourjehan.

Al-Suli's chess enthusiasm was at its highest pitch. He poured forth a succession of poems and curious anecdotes in its favour, and then addressed Zelica:—

“Narrate, O my child, that story of the Arab and his son, which I bade thee embroider in stuffs for the new curtains of our anderun.”

The maiden blushed, and smilingly complied, in tones of musical intonation that found an undying echo in the heart of Nourjehan:—

“An Arab chief had a favourite son, so passionately addicted to chess, that he forsook everything in its behalf. Food hardly passed his lips,—sleep but lightly pressed his

eyelids,—time, thought, and speech,—all were for chess, and chess alone. The youth's father regretfully saw life thus expended, and remonstrated upon such infatuated conduct in vain. 'Chess, O my father (was his reply to every remonstrance), chess contains a remedy for every earthly ill save sickness and death; and holds out a counsel for every difficulty, Such was his constantly repeated answer, and the father strove with his son in vain. Now at length a thought suggested itself. He charged the youth with a letter of importance, and a heavy bag of gold tomauns; bidding him mount his steed and convey them to a neighbouring sheik. His son departed accordingly on the mission. Then the chief disguised a party of Arabs and sent them on his son's track; directing them to rob him, bind him upon his horse, and bring him back to the encampment as a prisoner. Allah, the mighty and the merciful, opened the lad's eyes; and, looking over his shoulder, he saw his pursuers coming, mounted on mares fleet as the winds of the Zahara. The youth led them craftily into a rocky defile, difficult of access and of passage, and then adroitly leaping from his horse, escaped on foot with safety, returning to his father's tent with the letter and the gold. The chief said, 'Now, O my son, upon thy truth tell me, how did chess avail thee in this strait of peril of which thou speakest?' 'Verily, O my father,' replied the youth, 'to chess alone do I owe my escape; for bearing ever in mind that important maxim of the game, to render up a piece to save the mate, I sacrificed promptly my horse (knight), and thus redeemed both life and treasure!'

"Well spoken, my soul—light of my eyes!" said Al-Suli, fondly. "So runs, indeed, the legend. Thy words bring back my early times, when I played chess daily with

the caliph, the lord of Bagdad. In that capital was it I conquered that renowned player Al-Moawerdi, or the Pearl, to whom the commander of the faithful thereupon remarked, "Of a truth, man, Al-Suli hath changed thy rose-water to vinegar." \* And what news in the city of the shah, O our Nourjehan?"

"None of importance. Our Persians thou knowest are renowned chatterers. The chess-players of Ispahan talk of thy beauteous daughter, and wonder thou hast never yet married her;—but where, indeed, could be found the man worthy of her?"

Zelica blushed, and dropped her veil.

"My child," replied the old man, "is no light trifler. She obeys her father's will in all things, as bidden in the Koran,—health to that abundance of blessings! Zelica shall marry a chess-player, and so shall she have a man of understanding. I have spoken! The shah himself should not wed my daughter, unless she could love him, and unless he played chess."

"By the bread and salt," responded the youth, "a noble resolve, and most worthy of a chess-player of thy renown. Hast thou, O my father, ever stood in our shah's refreshing presence?"

"Not yet. I have awaited the return of Persia's prince, who at length comes with the army of conquest. Didst thou witness the triumphal entry of our valiant troops?"

"I was, of course, there with my regiment."

"They say the prince is the best chess-player of the age;

\* This comparison, though in a coarser form, exists in Dr. Hyde, as having been similarly applied, relatively to Al-Suli.

and it may well be so, since he cares so little for lighter pursuits. Indeed, men call him the woman-hater."

"O my father," cried Zelica, laughingly, "can there be a prince so hard of heart."

"Even so, my treasure; or wherefore can it be that, in the prime of life, the prince has never married? Great offence is taken by our doctors of religion that the heir to the throne should thus break one of our prophet's holy ordinances; while, all through Persia, every stripling, if he be of quality and wealth must have, besides his wife, an established and well-filled harem."

"Perhaps," interrupted Nourjehan, with a smile, "the prince of Persia—on whom be peace—has never yet met with a partner worthy to share his heart and throne, and looketh not on woman as a mere toy. But this is idle talk. Rather shew me, O my father, how this checkmate may be averted."

So the chess was resumed, and the conversation dropped. Nourjehan felt that his feelings were recognised, his affection shared, and awaited but for further assurance to put matters to the proof, by an explicit avowal of his sentiments to both father and daughter.

Happy then is Nourjehan now in the daily company of his beloved one, and happy is Zelica with the pride of her secret soul. Alas! why may not such felicity endure for ever? But a dim vapour rises in Fate's horizon, and that little cloud, but now no bigger than the man's hand of the inspired scribe, may yet become a rolling and mighty tempest, pregnant with swift destruction to the hopes of love.

## CHAPTER III.

The moollah, Reza Hafed, a very dignified sort of personage in his own eyes, was reclining within his dwelling on a pile of hassocks, in an apparently devout state of abstraction from mundane matters, when a female slave presented herself abruptly before him, and throwing aside her veil, disclosed the features of Miriam, Zelica's attendant. The moollah started at the apparition with unaffected surprise. Visions of Zelicass by the dozen, dying of love for him and his nephew, floating rapidly and instantaneously across his fervid imagination.

"Miriam!—Mashallah! My face is white to-day at thy sight, O girl of the cypress-waist and the almond-eye. Does thy coming relate to thy mistress? Speak, sugar-lips! Is my star at length in the ascendant?"

"How may I, O my lord, reveal my perplexity. Of a truth my soul is dried up, and my liver has become water." And Miriam burst forth into passionate weeping; wringing her hands, and slapping her face violently.

"But girl," said the moolah, "be thyself—be calm! Is Al-Suli dead?—What is it?—How has the evil eye stricken thee?"

"They have slain my lover—my Douban, the light of my eyes. O moollah, give me revenge, for my cause is thine. Did they not slight and insult thee?"

"Say on—say on, woman. Speak not of me," cried Reza Hafed, impetuously.

The girl proceeded to detail the circumstances of our

past narrative, as to the first coming to her master's dwelling of Nourjehan at night,—the death of the ruffians by his hand,—the strangling of the Ethiopian, her lover, in the garden,—the bearing away of the bodies,—all was minutely related from first to last. The moollah was confounded with wonder, but joy slowly lighted up his leaden-coloured visage. He saw in that story the seeds of certain revenge upon the chess-player and his daughter, who had refused the hand of his nephew. In all ages, the vengeance of a priest has been no laughing matter.

“And thou, too, O my clever Miriam, thou knewest before that Zelica was to be carried off!” The she-fiend bent her head in the affirmative. “Yes, I would have married her to my nephew, for she is fair, and Al-Suli has gold; but we were shamefully rejected, and at last excluded from the house. Much dirt did that old man make us eat. If what thou sayest can be proved,—by Mahommed, it bears upon their very lives; and large shall be thy reward, good Miriam, for thus coming forward in the cause of justice. The subjects of the shah murdered at dead of night—men strangled in cold blood!” and the moollah smiled complacently at the thought. “But,” continued he, “what or who can this person be—this Nourjehan, of whom thou speakest?—and wherefore should they give thy lover the cord at his command? Speak! this matter is not clear,—it passes comprehension.”

“Who can say?—Who knows, O moollah? He is, probably, a Bedouin chief of the desert, prowling in quest of prey, and thus known to the soldiers as one to be feared and dreaded. Doubtless he now but awaits the coming down of his own people to bear us away to the mountains in captivity.” And here Miriam resumed her agony of

tears and lamentations. "By thy soul, tell me, O moolah! tell the poor Miriam she shall be avenged."

The moollah pressed his forehead with his hand, and rested for a few moments deeply absorbed in thought, before he again spoke.

"Go home, girl, to thy dwelling. Make thy face even, and let the joy of vengeance lighten thy brow and lip. Eblis himself shall rise, but this thing shall be visited on our enemies. It is written in the book of destiny that Al-Suli shall be smitten root and branch, and that Miriam should then come to rest for ever within the walls of our own harem. Now go; I have spoken." And the moollah dismissed the girl with a wolfish smile. She returned home with a lightened heart, for she knew the priest would work suddenly as surely.

The moollah, left once more to his solitary meditations, remained for a short time in that pleasing trance of anticipation which the bad man feels when he holds a naked knife in his hand, and looks upon the sleeping innocent he is about to stab. Then he gathered up his robes, stuck his feet into his papooshes, and went straightway to the royal palace, the time being that at which the shah opened the great hall of morning audience. The moollah mixed with the throng in entering the palace, and sought to place himself in a conspicuous position. "Praise God!" muttered he to himself, "these are, indeed, news for the shah! And that hog of a police chief! his face will be blackened as the pit of Tophet. He once affronted me in the matter of my two slaves, whom he met at night returning home, bearing jars, which he said contained wine. The needful shall not be wanting to defile his father's grave.—The cow's son!" So Reza Hafed took up a point of the circle, with



the evident manner of one come, according to law and custom, to ask somewhat of majesty, and composed himself patiently till he should be called upon to speak.

The audience was formed, and the Shah Jehan was in full divan with his wezeers and chief officers grouped reverentially around him; resembling a galaxy of stars about the sun of noon. The shah was a devout believer in Islamism, and made it a constant point to pay particular attention to all matters connected with the church; giving them consideration in preference to things secular. The monarch called then, at once, upon the moollah to advance to the foot of the throne; and there, upon the verge of the royal praying-carpet, did Reza Hafed distil the leprous juice of his story into the ears of king and court; heightening it with every possible addition to stir up the ire of the sleeping lion. The sensation produced at the close of his smooth and well-delivered speech was electrical.

"By our crown!" said the shah, "but this is a strange story, O moollah! A romance is it, even like that of Sinbad. Men slain under the walls of the favoured city—the abode of peace—the refuge of Persia—the asylum of the universe! Offenders strangled, at word of command, like dogs,—robbers from the desert—heroes from the clouds!—how shall this be made clear to us? Stand forth! Zaul Zemshir, lieutenant of the police, chief of our nasackschays,—stand out, thou accursed one, and say, can such things be, and thy head remain yet upon thy shoulders? Why is the king's robe of protection thus defiled? O precious servant of royalty!—O careful guardian of the peace!—speak as to this matter!"

The nasackschay bashi, or chief executioner, a stout pompous personage, glittering in the trappings of his important post, answered, amazed and trembling,—

"By the head of the shah!—by the life—by the breath—I cannot speak. What shall I say? My soul has flown—my brain is roast-meat!"

"Away then at once to the dwelling of this Al-Suli!" commanded the shah, in a tone of decision and dignity. "Take with thee a soldier's guard, and a litter for the women. Bring hither before my throne every person found in that accursed den of pollution, and that on the instant. Do this secretly and silently. Go!"

"Bechesm!—on my head be it!—I am your sacrifice!" And Zaul Zemshir quitted the royal presence to summon his myrmidons and obey the orders of the king, in a mood which betokened little comfort to the objects of his mission, irritated as the chief executioner was at having been thus rebuked by his sovereign in full divan. After all, to the philosopher, there are some points about absolute despotism very redeemable. Events march so quickly beneath its sway, that life, if you can hold it, becomes of double length. Persia has no lawyers, in our sense of the word,—is not that a blessing? The will of the shah is the law and the lawyers. A waive of his royal hand relieves you of headache for ever, by simply taking off your head; a look of his eye raises the camel-driver to a prince. If the shah is a good fellow, things cannot move better than beneath so simple a code of rule; if, on the contrary, the king goes too fast, why, the bowstring is applied to his neck, and one of his seven hundred sons reigns in his stead. But we digress.

The golden lord of light and life, the brilliant sun, is not more punctual in his diurnal visits to the faithful city of Ispahan, than was our friend Nourjehan to the anderûn of Al-Suli. While black mischief was coming upon that peaceful household, like the simoom of Egyptian sands, its

inmates were as usual collected in social divan ; Al-Suli and Nourjehan being deeply engaged in threading the intricacies of a chess position, as difficult of solution as any of Kling's or Bone's, and their attention was proportionately diverted from things trivial and profane. The loud and sudden tramp of horses' feet drew forth an exclamation from the rosy mouth of Zelica.

"Soldiers of the shah! and coming here! Oh! my father! Oh! our friend! Look, look!" The chess-players started up, and in the agitation of the moment it is recorded that the chess-board and men were spilled upon the floor. Appearances were certainly alarming.

The nasackschay bashi, accompanied by a strong band of his trusty nasackschays, and a troop of guards, commanded by our old acquaintance Ali Mohammed, had invested the dwelling in regular form of siege. Zaul Zemshir, far too great a man to dismount upon an occasion so paltry as a mere arrest, sat, or rather reclined, upon his Arabian charger, and gave forth sundry commands in a tone of suitable importance. A party of ferashes, on foot, armed with iron-pointed staves and javelins, had already filled the garden. The wrath of the mighty Zaul had in no wise abated during his dusty ride in the full blaze of the vertical sun.

"Go in to that pit of perdition—that hole of abomination," said he to Ali Mohammed. "Go in there, in the name of the shah, on whose shadow be the eternity of space, and drag forth its vile inhabitants to light. Bind their arms with thongs, and if they resist give them much slipper upon the mouth. Our people may break and ransack the house meanwhile of the plunder it contains. Oh! these evil-doers! Their souls to the flame of Jehanum,

for the ashes they have cast this day upon my head. Well, well; I am somebody, too, in Persia. See, I curse and spit upon them. How weary is my soul of this dirt! Go in, Ali; I await thee here."

Ali Mohammed and his men dismounted and rushed into the house. The quiet of the sanctuary was instantly transformed into the confusion of Babel. One party, consisting chiefly of the greedy ferashes, dispersed instantly throughout the house, breaking and destroying all that came within their reach, and packing up for transportation all that looked pleasant and portable. The noise was truly infernal. Ali Mohammed and his troop suddenly presented themselves to the inmates of the dwelling. Zelica, trembling as the dove, had dropped her veil, and leaned upon her venerable sire. Nourjehan quietly abode the event, with his face enveloped in his military cloak. The soldiers rushed upon the peaceful group, with the humane intention of making their arrest, after the most approved Persian fashion, by first striking the prisoners down to earth. Nourjehan touched Ali Mohammed's arm, and that officer, recollecting him, halted his blood-hounds in great confusion.

"What meaneth this? Tell me on your life!" exclaimed Nourjehan.

Ali Mohammed hastily recapitulated the incidents of the morning, dwelling on the shah's order and his own immediate chief's command. He then drew himself up with downcast eyes, and with his right hand pressed upon his forehead.

"But when ye bear the shah's most gracious order to arrest," said Nourjehan, "are ye bidden equally to abuse? O ye of little discernment! Speak to me. Are ye Persians, or are ye not rather Turks, that ye act in this rough way?"

"Such is ever our custom," stammered forth Ali Mohammed.

"The custom, then, shall be mended," rejoined Nourjehan, in a whisper. "Hearken; O man of violence, and wine, and dice! The orders of our shah must be obeyed. Is he not the father of his people? Bear us, then, before him in covered litters. Plunder the dwelling; nay, burn it if ye will. But mark! whoso lays hand or finger on the person of Al-Suli or of his daughter, be it but to touch the hem of their garments, that man, I swear, dies the death. O that swine of a Moollah! My spirit burns to smite him in the face! Now bear us quickly to the palace. Al-Suli! O my father! put thy trust in Allah, the redeeming and the compassionate. Dear Zelica, I answer for thy safety." And Nourjehan unhesitatingly passed his arm around the slender waist of the drooping maiden.

The horse-litters were brought hastily into the garden. Into one of these entered Nourjehan, tenderly supporting the lady of his soul; the other serving to convey the chess professor and the faithless Miriam. Nourjehan would not have changed his position for the throne of Hind, and it must be owned Zelica bore with astonishing resignation the circumscribed space wherein she and her companion moved. Certain words there spoken on the maiden's lip probably reassured her fluttering heart.

The cavalcade was set in motion through the city, a party of the soldiers and nasackschays remaining behind to complete their labour of love, in the way of pillage and destruction. Ali Mohammed rode silently by the side of the chief executioner, whose demeanour was now very like that of a conquering general entering his native city in triumph.

"Are the women handsome?" asked Zaul Zemshir. "Have ye bound them with the camel-tie, according to the orders of the shah? What booty have ye? My soul is impatient at your silence, man."

"Thy servant is very little," answered Ali Mohammed, almost saucily. "He knows nothing. The veils of the women were not raised. After all, we are Mussulmans. We left the prisoners unbound to save trouble. What booty should we have, O my chief? Hadst thou wished to steal, why not have dismounted? Lastly, I thy devoted one, am a soldier, but not a bandit."

The rage of the great man boiled over. His speech became positive bellowing, broken into short sentences by the curvetting of his horse upon the rough stones.

"And you have come away without gold or jewels! O Ali! What then is there for me? What new abomination is this? Camel-headed wretch! Ass of Balaam! But I, too, am somebody. Yes—yes—we shall see. I am your superior officer, child of Zatan. What stuff do you talk? Oh! beast, and brother of beasts!"

Ali Mohammed replied only with a shrug of his shoulders, indicative of the most profound indifference; and thus they reached the palace, figuratively termed by the people as the "Asylum of the king of kings." Zaul Zemshir quitted stirrup in what we Europeans should call a pretty sort of passion enough, and advanced to the foot of the throne to render an account of his mission.

The Shah Jehan still sat upon the justice-seat, and various rumours having gone abroad with the speed of the wind, as to the apprehension of the great chess-player, Al-Suli, for a long series of murders, robberies, and burnings, the grand saloon of audience was crowded by all

whose rank entitled them to the honours of "the meet." The prisoners were placed in a row near the royal musnud; Nourjehan closely enfolded in his heavy cloak, and supporting the fair trembler, Zelica, who clung to him in that dread moment as the vine clings to the cedar in the forests of Demawend. Zaul Zemshir pompously made his report, hinting that doubtless, were time given thoroughly to raze Al-Suli's humble mansion to the ground, many slaughtered Persians would make their appearance, there resting at present in untimely graves. The shah waved his hand with an expression of satisfaction, and the chief of the police standing back made way for the moollah.

Reza Hafed repeated his charge against the captives, and dilated, as far as he durst, upon the enormity of their guilt. His bloated countenance, redolent of the hue of the forbidden juice of the grape, lighted up like a huge pomegranate, as he poured forth words more and more forcible and criminatory. The base slave Miriam told her tale, and whispers ran among the wezeers, which, had they fallen upon the ear of Al-Suli, would hardly have been deemed consolatory. The deep-toned voice of the shah at length stills the murmurs of the divan, like oil poured on the waves.

"And so, Al-Suli, thou man of chess," said the Lord of Persia, "thy peaceful habits serve but to mask thy dark dealings in the blood of Iran's sons. Have ye no shame, man? Say, ye have heard the charge. Some trap appears to have been laid by you and your comrade to draw these men to their slaughter-house. Speak! ye blood-thirsty ones, answer this thing. The Shah Jehan sits here as God's vicegerent, to render justice to the peasant as to the prince."

The courtiers, of course, applauded this sentiment by a murmur of applause. "Wonderful—wonderful!" exclaimed Zaul Zemshir. "Was there ever king like ours?" Nourjehan remained silent; the aged chess-player strove to speak, but the words faltered on his tongue. An honest man, unjustly accused, is ever less able to defend himself in speech than a scoundrel.

"The spoiler came by night, O shah," said Al-Suli, "and me and mine were bound as robbers bind their prey. God—the great, the powerful—sent this young man, and we were then wonderfully delivered. Blows were struck; but the blood spilled was that of the violent. The king loves justice; he will weigh these things, and the truth will be seen. Of the Ethiop I know nothing. The shah will permit us to go away with whitened faces, and will incline his merciful ear to relieve us in our adversity."

But the brow of the Shah Jehan was troubled, as the brow of Mount Ararat in a storm.

"Ye own your guilt, then," said the king, "O sons of strife and workers of iniquity? Life has been poured abroad like water, and no excuse given beyond lying words of wind. By the decrees of the Koran, blood for blood should be strictly rendered; and who are ye, O little souls, that ye should be excepted from the holy ordination? Very strange and ridiculous is thy tale, Al-Suli; and of the youth there, ye own ye know nothing. Yet thy comrade in blood stands before his king in obstinate silence, and thus avows his guilt. Now hear the words of the shah. Thy daughter may be spared; but wherefore should not the sword of justice smite the necks of the two murderers, seeing that your guilt is so clearly evident?"

A plaintive cry arose from Zelica, like the wailing of Rachel reft of her young.



"Mercy—mercy," cried the maiden. "Mercy, O king! as you expect mercy for yourself hereafter."

"The woman insults the shah!" cried the zealous Zaul Zemshir. "Gag her; give her mouth the slipper!" And, suiting accordingly the action to the word, the chief-executioner rushed towards the maiden to strike her on the face with the heavy brass-heeled shoe of office.

But the indignity of this uncalled-for outrage was unexpectedly checked. Unable longer to contain his feelings, Nourjehan dropped his cloak, flung off his Turcoman cap, and suddenly darting upon the chief executioner, as the wolf bounds on the deer, wrenched the heavy shoe from his hand by main force, and dealt him three or four blows on the mouth, so heavy as to batter in the amazed officer's front teeth. Turning then rapidly upon the moollah, Nourjehan seized him by the throat, and although the priest of Mohammed was of powerful and athletic form, our hero shook him till he was black in the face, and then dashed him down bodily upon the marble floor like a log of wood, himself almost shrieking the while with rage, as he thus vented his passion. The court was struck dumb with amaze. Nourjehan stood over the moollah, like a tiger over the slaughtered buffalo.

"Enough—enough!" cried the Shah Jehan, in convulsions of merriment. "Hold! dear Nourjehan. Let the poor moollah go, or thy father will die of laughter."

Loud acclamations rent the air. Shouts of joy shook the roof of the hall. Nourjehan's disguise exists no more. The beloved of Zelica is the prince royal of Persia. The maid became sensible of the truth, and fell into his arms. Nourjehan bore his fair prize close to the verge of the throne.

"I ask, O my father,—I beg this dear maiden for my bride, with the consent of her parent, Al-Suli."

"My son, my daughter, the blessing of a father on you both!" And the good shah tenderly embraced the pair. "How could I refuse thee aught, O Nourjehan,—thee, the right hand of Persia—the young lion of Islam—the pride, the glory of my blood and race."

"Belli—Belli! well spoken, O great king," ejaculated the courtiers, with all the vivacity of Persians. The dramatic excitement of the *dénouement* had broken down ceremony for the moment, and rank and grade appeared forgotten. It was one vast family of love and happiness. It need hardly be said that the matrimonial scheme was delightedly acquiesced in by Al-Suli, and thus was Nourjehan both MATED and CHECKMATED.

"Speak, O my dear son!" continued the beneficent Shah Jehan. "Say, what shall be done with this calumnious moollah?"

"Let him, O my father," replied Nourjehan—"let the moollah Reza Hafed take ten thousand pieces of gold from the royal treasury of Persia. Let him be clothed with a robe of honour, and made chief of the mosques; for so alone can a prince of thy blood take revenge. Moreover, the moollah has looked upon the dwelling of Al-Suli, and no man may be abased who hath ever known, however remotely, the future queen of Persia. So be thy face bright, O priest! for we forgive thee."

"May I be thy sacrifice!" cringed the moollah. "Oh! could thy slave but have known!"

Nourjehan addressed the word to Zaul.

"And thou, the servant of the shah, how likest thou the slipper thyself, man? O hard of heart! learn to be mer-

ciful while dutiful. Our right hand hath spoiled thy beauty in the matter of thy teeth, and we will not forget we rest thy debtor."

Zaul Zemshir bent to the very ground, and to the day of his death ceased not to inflict six times a year upon his family and friends, in a story of some two hours' duration, the extraordinary and familiar condescension of the heir-apparent upon the present occasion.

"The faces of all who look upon this scene of my joy should be whitened by the shah's graciousness," continued Nourjehan; "only the woman Miriam is an outcast from the throne of mercy. Put that she-devil forth from Ispahan, O Ali Mohammed, and, on peril of her life, never let her again enter the city of delights, or she shall verily become a fresh by-word in Persia, and the fate of the abominable shall be likened to the fate of Miriam, who sold her master's house for a price, and was therefore burned with the fires of earth and of hell. For thee, Ali Mohammed, be thyself henceforth captain of a thousand men, but if thou must dice and drink of the unlawful, do it, good fellow, in the privacy of thy *anderûn*, and not in the public streets."

"My house is enlarged!—my head reaches the skies! May the prince live for ever!" responded Ali Mohammed, as he led forth Miriam from the presence.

Then Nourjehan tenderly took the hand of Al-Suli—"Thy dwelling, O father of Zelica, be henceforth in the royal palace beneath the shadow of the King of kings, and many be our battles on the chess-field. Wonderful was the star of destiny which led me first into the presence of this my beauteous bride."

And Nourjehan pressed Zelica to his bosom, while joyous

shouts of loud acclaim again rent the air. "Take me now unto the realms of light, O Allah, when thou wilt," audibly prayed the shah, "my line will leave heirs to the throne of Persia."

Nourjehan and Zelica were wedded with fitting pomp, and for forty days Ispahan rang with the public rejoicings upon this happy occasion. Even Ismael Khan was restored to favor, and the past was washed in the waters of oblivion.

\* \* \* \* \*

And the Shah Jehan was gathered to his fathers, and Nourjehan his son reigned in his stead over Persia, ruling his people many years in mercy and in justice, as we find written in the chronicles of his kingdom. His union with Zelica, the fair chess-player, was bright and uninterrupted until a late period of life, when as our Persian original manuscript phrases it, "they were separated by the stern divider of delights and breaker of friendships."

## A GAME OF CHESS WITH NAPOLEON.

THE scene of our story is a dinner in Belgrave Square, London; time, ten o'clock at night; date, the twenty-first day of March, in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and forty-three. Horatius Flaccus could not better have observed the unities. We love to set up our landmarks with precision.

The dinner was drawing to a close; for the varied courses and contributions levied upon earth and air, rock and water, had been withdrawn to make way for the costly and sparkling dessert. Ices, sugars, and fruits, in their most extravagant complications, were heaped high upon massive salvers of silver and of chrystal. Wines of Burgundy, of Constantia, and of Madeira, had superseded the vintages of Germany and of Champagne. The heat of the battle was over, the "din of arms" had passed, and the conquerors were at length resting on their laurels, in that beatific state of repose only to be understood by those favoured mortals who have triumphantly passed through the fiery ordeal of a first-rate dinner, without one dyspeptic twinge to mar their budding hopes of a happy digestion. Every loving mother of every dear son present could have said with the Roman matron, "Thanks to the gods, my boy has done his duty!" and well could every fond son respond, "This day, at least, I have practised that first cardinal virtue of

dining well!" Be it known to the profane, that this was a banquet of state, a real Lucullus' spread, given by Mr. and Mrs. Goldhall, the eminent Lombard Street bankers, to the Herr von Wolverdenden, the great Hamburg merchant,—the man of millions and of mines, the lord of Mexico and Peru, the potentate of "Change," throughout the chief money-marts of civilized Europe. We say we love to start mathematically. The party assembled comprised just ten individuals. Happy ten!

The Amphytrion of the feast, Mr. Goldhall, posted at the lower end of the table, was a common bankerlike-looking sort of a person, and may be dismissed in few words accordingly. He was a dried-up thin thing, like Shakspeare's "shotten herring;" very short, very spare, and very smart. Mr. Goldhall was not one of those persons of whom it is said they never had a grandfather. Mr. Goldhall's grandsire had been an eminent manufacturer of Havannah cigars from cabbage-leaves, in Pinafore Place, Whitechapel. This piece of family history was probably not known to all the component parts of the present dinner-circle, but strikes us as being, nevertheless, highly interesting. The social system of Great Britain cannot, after all, be so very bad, if such a tree produces such fruits. Could Mr. Goldhall, the grandsire, familiarly known in Whitechapel as "Nobby Sam," have risen this night from his quiet grave for just five minutes, and seen his grandson dining in a palace, with half-a-dozen servants in scarlet behind his chair, why, Mr. Goldhall, our grandfather, would have returned "*to earth*" the happiest of happy ancestors. And now for the lady of Mr. Goldhall.

The head of the table was graced by the portly form of the rich banker's *cara sposa*; the happy pair not being

quite registered on that very select circle of London fashionable society, in which to preside at their dinner-table in person is deemed a vulgar heterodoxy. Mrs. Goldhall was "fair and forty," and her full round shoulders were stripped almost to their elbows, in honour of the occasion. In eighteen hundred and forty-three, beauty appears to have been measured and appreciated by the square foot; its fairest blossoms vying with each other as to shewing the most—in quantity. Never were seen gowns cut so low, tuckers so invisible. In Mrs. Goldhall, this approach to the costume of the Venus de Medici was, in the eye of the philosopher, pleasant and primitive; in some other women we have seen thus sitting for "the nude," the sensation conveyed has been an anxious desire to cover their charms in crape, as we would mourn for the departed, and also to save such very scraggy forms from lumbago. The lady-patronesses of Almack's should look into this, and constitute a "Jury of shoulders," with fully constituted powers to "bind and to loose," according to circumstances. This is a parenthesis. We have not yet quite dismissed Mrs. Goldhall's costume.

Nid-nodding like a hearse-horse beneath her ostrich-feathers, the form of the fair lady, perhaps, resembled that of Olympian Juno in her majesty of mien; sparkling, too, in a profusion of diamonds, which scattered around their vivid scintillations like brightest sunbeams of morn, playing upon the silvery, frost-encrusted, waving willow. This metaphor is getting too much for us. Juno may or may not have worn feathers and diamonds both. Beauty unadorned is described by the poets as a very fine thing. Beauty is none the worse for having £10,000 worth of jewels enwreathed in her shining tresses. The gardens of

the Hesperides sparkle with very tempting fruit, particularly at the present high price of bread. Mrs. Goldhall was just what a banker's wife should be, and not a bit overdone. There was evidently a reserve, in case of a run upon the counter. The lady friends of Mrs. Goldhall were wont to whisper that her constant smile was chiefly assumed to shew off her diamonds. These slanderers were lady friends, men knew better. A really fine woman prefers her own charms to all the brilliants of Golconda: Mrs. Goldhall smiled to shew her teeth.

Of the mind and intellect of Mrs. Goldhall, there is no necessity to say much. When ladies rise to a certain position in society, we see no occasion they have for brain at all. Intellect is very well in its way, but by no means essential to Belgrave Square; and we have seen so many walking-sticks upon the highways and byways of life, ticketed as "creatures all mind," that really the society of an acknowledged blockhead, whether male or female, becomes quite "refreshing," if only from its rarity. Mrs. Goldhall had mind enough for her husband, and he for her.

In the post of honour—the van of the conflict—on the right hand of our beautiful hostess, was placed Von Wolverdenden, the millionaire for whom the dinner was given. This great man was stopping a few days in London, and was connected in some huge money operations with Goldhall's firm. Wolverdenden was fifty years of age, of good figure, slightly tending to *embonpoint*, thin white hair, high forehead, and with a pair of small black eyes; so sharp and restless, they appeared as if they could pierce through a granite wall. The Von was gentlemanly and agreeable in conversation, from his great experience of life. Of perfect self-command, and what divines would term "dis-



simulation," his motto through life appeared to the mob to be, *laissez aller*, while in reality his brain worked like a never-dying steam-engine. On his white waistcoat, flowing forth like a sea of purity, dwelt in solitary repose some one Continental order of knighthood, bestowed by a certain petty German prince, in return for a loan which no man in Europe could have negotiated but Wolverdenden. Our millionaire, be it noted, was a votary rather to Epicurus than to the Stoic school. He was a *gastronome* worthy of Ude, Eustache, or Beauvilliers. Von had dined to-day well, and had been much amused with the sayings and doings of the assembled party. On the best possible terms with himself, he was now talking nonsense to his neighbours, *pour passer le temps*; leading the conversation in that decided tone which a real live lion ought to assume, when he condescends to roar soft for your amusement. While chatting, Wolverdenden was tapping the table carelessly with his white, well-formed hand, as if admiring a huge carbuncle he wore in a ring, one of the finest stones in Europe. Save the star on his breast and the ring on his hand, our guest wore not gem nor jewel. Mrs. Goldhall had caught herself frequently sighing during the last course, as she looked, not on the German, but on his ring.

Poets, painters, and musicians, agree that their finest effects are formed by contrast. At the lower end of the table, to the right of Mr. Goldhall, and, consequently, placed in oblique opposition to the Hamburg Plutus, reposed a poet—a real, living poet—christened by his mother (or, as the great American writers would say, "his maternal parent") as Diedrich Platter, but rejoicing at present in the name of Stanislaus Poniatowski Skinundgrieff. A poet and a millionaire surely present the very

climax of contrast; and could that poor Lazarus of a poet be otherwise seated at the mahogany of Dives than at its lower end?

A prophet has no honour in his own country. Had the boy Platter remained all his life stitched to a mother's petticoat in Bavaria, he would have manufactured the brooms she was in the habit of selling about the streets of Munich, but would have manipulated little beyond those essential articles of housewifery. Platter had an aspiring soul; he eschewed the osier and the heather; he had gone early in life as far north as Warsaw, in the respectable capacity of valet to a Russian quack doctor; he returned, to bless civilized Europe, the celebrated Polish poet, Stanislaus Poniatowski Skinundgrieff, banished (he said and swore, and we are bound to believe him) by that arch autocrat of all the Russias, the Emperor Nicholas, as the staunchest partisan of the Poles, and the most unquenchable Béranger of Bérangers. Skinundgrieff's outward man was a poor, cadaverous-looking creature, God knows! but he had, doubtless, that within which "passeth show," and the ladies of Paris and London pulled caps for his sonnets. Skinundgrieff spoke both English and French with an accent so sweetly detestable, that, said they, he "must be" a Polish genius of the finest water. The fair sex jump so kindly at conclusions. Skinundgrieff filled up albums and scrap-books with what he termed Sclavonic ballads in their mother tongue, and who could contradict him? He sang songs like the cries of starving wolves in the snow, which did duty for Polish hymns of liberty. He recited verses which the very young ladies loved, because so "sweetly incomprehensible." At a lord-mayor's ball, given for the benefit of the Polish refugees, it was Skin-

undgrieff who returned thanks to the company, in the name of "the Sarmatian people !" In fact, Skinundgrieff was one of the lions of the season, and a very pretty lion, too ! He had lately taken to write his *Boethry* in English, and had brought upon the present occasion, in his pocket, a choice manuscript entitled, *The Blasted Bud*, which, it had been arranged, he should presently read up, to the edification of the guests assembled. We have termed Skinundgrieff a lion. A word upon the lion's mane.

The hair of our poet waved down the greasy collar of his coat, like the coarse bristles of a dozen wild horses' tails gathered into a wilderness of roughness. We have thought this feature deserving a special paragraph ; and the more so, because his best friends must admit his hair to have been singularly striking, and crinatorically redolent of genius. How can a man have talent without he sport much hair ? Can a man write, shorn of moustache and imperial, of whisker and of beard ? No, the thing is self-demonstrative. We have even been told that, in that highly cultivated country termed Poland, the very words "genius" and "hair" are synonymous, both bearing some sort of affinity to the poll or head. After all, our private belief is, that Skinundgrieff was a Mussulman, and had thus suffered his crop to "run to hair," that the Angel of Death might have a sure purchase when he should grasp the knot, for the purpose of carrying its wearer safely across the bridge, to cast him into the arms of the white-limbed houris of Paradise. Only, not to speak it profanely, were *we* the Angel of Death, we should hesitate, ungloved, at grasping hair so innocent of comb and brush.

"And shall 'the male sex' all our theme engross ?

Rise, honest Muse, and sing——"

the lady who sits by Skinundgrieff—the lioness of the assembly, at least, though not the lion—the beloved of Exeter Hall—the pearl of *Evangelical Magazines*—the watcher of the *Watchman*—the rose of the *Record*—the mother (spiritually speaking) of sucking missionaries to the heathen—the terror of all lollipop-lovers in her parish infant-school—the balm of Gilead to Newgate felons, Australian “transported ones,” and Bridewell virgins—the patroness of poets in general, and of Stanislaus Poniatowski Skinundgrieff in particular—the authoress of those charming and “undying” songs, “She sat beside the Parish Pump,” and “He died for Rosabel;” in a word, Miss Clarissa Knaggett herself, and no other.

Miss Knaggett, having just turned fifty-two, had entered upon the “ethereal,” *selon les régles*, eschewing all that was mundane, and what she termed “unspiritual.” A pupil of that high school of composition, introduced into our literature during the last twenty years, she had refined her language and her pen, till both breathed the very odours of purity and sanctity. Several magazines of the day rejoiced in her contributions. Happy magazines! She regularly corresponded with that very great American, Mrs. Sigourney, and in that delicious style of speech which so eminently characterises the first writers on every subject in the world (and out of the world)—need we say we mean Sydney Smith’s pets, the Americans?—had assured the friend of her soul in a late letter, that “her spirit wonderfully harmonised and rejoiced in holding commune with that lean thing, Skinundgrieff; for, in his powerfully gifted mind alone on weary earth did she find that sweet gush of thought, that earnest truthfulness of purpose, and that very deep purity of sentiment, fitted so especially to

appreciate and delicately recognise the trembling feebleness of one so unhappily 'all nerve,' as she, Clarissa Knaggett. To sum up, other lady-writers may be blue, cobalt or Prussian; Miss Knaggett was purple.

Miss Knaggett constantly assured her friends that she was all MIND, except such parts as were all NERVE; still the frame which held together so much *mind* and *nerve* must not be altogether passed over. Miss Knaggett was tall and very thin, her features pinched up as if with drinking daily huge draughts of vinegar; with the slightest possible *soupçon* of squint, which, however, rather relieved than injured the general expression of her countenance. To meet both such eyes at once would have been sadly too much. Her teeth were beautifully white, as indeed, they ought to be, considering what they had cost. Her curls were Truefitt's *chef-d'œuvre*. Her friends said she rouged, but her maid denied it, and we always believe a lady's maid. At any rate, the faint red tint playing around Miss Knaggett's nose-tip, and brightening up with such increased effect daily after dinner, must have been purely the "rose-pink" of nature's dressing-case.

Miss Knaggett's form was worth looking at twice. Her dress was cut much lower than Mrs. Goldhall's, but she had just whispered to Skinundgrieff that "she thanked God she knew better than to dress like that very indecorous person." Certainly Miss Knaggett could not well have dressed indecently. As an osteological specimen, her shoulders were perfect. To an anatomical lecturer, they would have been invaluable, affording the means of illustrating the wonderful powers of nature, by answering satisfactorily, that very natural question, "Can such dry bones live?"

We are dwelling too exclusively on Miss Knaggett (although she really possessed £500 a-year), and must take care our story (for we have a story coming) does not get cold the while. So leave we the lady to continue in that sweet Platonic description of flirtation with Skinundgrieff in which she was now deeply involved; and in which sort of thing, be it noted, we have ever found ladies of the genus "saint" most eager to indulge. We suppose they want to plant below a constant *pied à terre*, to be enabled to jump farther at each leap heavenward. The remainder of our dinner company need not be minutely depicted. They were the usual mixed lot one meets with upon such occasions,—fine, formal, and fussy,—grave, giggling, and grand. Let them, then, enjoy their pine apple ice, while we do a bit of philosophy. Most true it is that there is philosophy in every thing, ay, even in a rotten nut, if we could but find it out.

A problem presents itself, which philosophy alone can solve. On sitting down to dinner, Von Wolverdenden and Skinundgrieff had seen each other for the first time; but, before the fish and soup were removed, had agreed in as pretty a mutual feeling of hate and contempt as was ever engendered in hearts of flesh. Why was this?

"The grapes are sour," cries Æsop's fox; "Silver and gold are dirt," sings the poet; "Give me the treasures of the mind, the sparkling brain—gems of genius!" Skinundgrieff was a most legitimate lyric. This was his constant theme, this the one great string of his harp. On the other hand, money looks down upon mud as presenting a most inconvenient accompaniment, and your real capitalist necessarily views a pauper as mere dirt, though he be poet or divine, astronomer or geologist; and never had bloodhound

sharper nose to track his quarry than had Von Wolverdenden to look in upon a man's inmost soul, and seize at a glance upon his quality. Wolverdenden was the field-marshal risen from the ranks. No disguise could save poverty from his piercing vision. The poet was too visible in the outward man of Skinundgrieff. It penetrated through the dirty thin imperial on his lower lip, it flashed forth its light in the half inch of turned-down shirt-collar, it soared triumphantly in the dirty woollen hair-fringe which colored the neck of our Sarmatian hero! These points were duly and severally marked by the millionaire, as were his own shining carbuncle and knightly order, by the half-starved Skinundgrieff, and there was enmity between the two celebrities accordingly.

The antipathy which exists between ermine and rags, wealth and want, silver and brass, is a fight like that of dog and rat; a strife "never ending, still beginning"—a battle of direst extermination—a war to the knife! In the mind of Wolverdenden, poets and penmen at large were associated with hulks of the sea-ports, with the gutters of the streets, with the Carmagnole and the Marseillaise, with 10,000 *Sansculottes* dancing *ca ira* in Regent Street or the Tuileries Gardens. And so, on the other hand, was the rich man crucified on the burning brain of the poet, as the type of intolerance, bigotry, priest-craft, Jesuitism, whips, chains, the Inquisition, and Negro slavery. The Cræsus of our dinner had not deigned even to ask of Mrs. Goldhall the name of the poet. He was crushing his enemy to the dust in silence, by the mere moral weight of his Peruvian "dross;" by his renown, now European, as "the first capitalist of the time." The poet shewed less force of mind, for he ever and anon poured forth into the skinny

ear of Miss Knaggett a tirade against cash, strong enough to have ground Lombard Street to powder. Unhappy poet! the grapes are sour and yet sourer. See ye not in your darkness, that, seated as are ye two, at the upper and lower end of that glittering mahogany—ye, poet and millionaire—see ye not, that ye present types of the two great classes of mankind,—the ups and the downs, the strong and the weak, the antipodes of humanity in its social relations, the wise and the foolish! But, of ye two, O poet and money-man! which is the wise and which the foolish, is a question all too metaphysical for our solution.

And now we have really broken ground, and are entering upon our story, such as it is.

The conversation of the assembled dinner-party suddenly turned upon THE GAME OF CHESS, and, for the first time, words were directly exchanged between Skinundgrieff and Wolverdenden. The poet was, or pretended to be, a chess enthusiast. Poor soul! enthusiasm of any sort discounts for very little in Lombard Street.

“What an immense mind you must have, you dear creature! And so you are a great chess-player? Oh, I dote upon chess! It is such a love of mine!” said Miss Knaggett to Skinundgrieff.

“I have played chess,” cried the poet, proudly, “with the first players throughout civilized Europe,—with Deschappelles, with M'Donnell, with De la Bourdonnais. I have played in Poland four games at once without seeing the board. There's nothing in it. All a mere effort of the memory. But I have given up chess lately. It tore me to pieces. My nervous system was too delicate. I have been awakened in the night by horrible visions; chess-knights and bishops have been dancing upon my breast,



driving their weapons into my heart, darting their forked talons into my marrow—ugh!”

“You must have gone to bed without supper!” remarked Von Wolverdenden. The company laughed. It takes so little from a great man to make a party smile. Skinundgrieff was ruffled; but poets who will sit at rich men’s tables must be large of swallow.

Skinundgrieff rallied. “Now,” said he, inwardly, “will I prove that mind is not to be silenced by mere matter.” The poet made himself up for mischief.

“I repeat,” said Skinundgrieff, “chess is nothing. When I played chess, it was after a fashion peculiar to myself ——”

“Peculiar enough!” whispered the Von to the lady, “peculiar enough, I’ll be sworn!”

“When I played chess, I analysed the subject thus. A certain thing is to be done. Very well. A situation is to be produced, at whatever cost, called checkmate. Very well. I looked then neither to the right nor to the left; I gave up queen and castle, knight and pawn. I went straightways and simply to the mark I purposed. I gave checkmate. Bah! I found it quite easy; in fact, chess is a bagatelle—provided a man has—a—a—a—certain calibre of mind!”

“Hear, hear!” exclaimed Wolverdenden. “Philidor is risen from the tomb!”

Another laugh rang round the table. Miss Knaggett sighed. What an advantage is a strong cast of the eye! The fair lady was enabled now to drop a tearful look of sympathy and admiration upon the *soi-disant* Pole, while, with her sinister orb, she shot a ray of fiery wrath and pity

at the man of Hamburg, and all with a single effort of volition !

“ When I travelled through Circassia,” continued the bard, raising his voice—“ when I made the tour of Circassia and Georgia, I had just attained my greatest force in chess. I there rode 2000 miles in company with the renowned Acrakaporos Khan, the first chess-player in the country, and we played chess mentally all the way. In truth, we agreed that the only things which spoil chess are the board and men !”

“ If your game lasted 2000 miles, it must have been a long one !” remarked Wolverdenden, dryly ; “ and I should have thought a great chief had something better to do than to play chess either horseback or assback. I have been a chess-player myself, and a sad waste of time I found it. To be sure it turned up a trump at last ; though my chess was all European, and never was exhibited in Circassia.”

“ You a chess-player !” cried Mrs. Goldhall ; and “ You a chess-player !” echoed half-a-dozen voices, in all sorts of keys. Whoever heard of such a thing as a millionaire a chess-player ? As well be a mathematician, or even a poet !

The great man was evidently flattered by the tribute of homage rendered in this burst of surprise. He smiled ; and his smile was of a character to represent the complacent, the dignified, the patronizing.

“ I have played chess,” said Wolverdenden, emphatically, “ with the greatest chess-player of the century : with a far greater player than De la Bourdonnais or Deschapelles.”

“ And who might that be ?”

“ With Napoleon Buonaparte. I have played a game

of chess with Napoleon, and beaten him. Who else living can say this?"

"Chess with Buonaparte!" cried the lady of the mansion. "How droll—how exceedingly remarkable! How did he look?—how did it all happen?—what did he say?—were you not afraid? How very extraordinary! Oh, we must hear all about it! Come, tell us, there's a kind creature!—do, now, tell us all about it!"

"Yes, yes!" shouted Goldhall; "pray tell us all about it! A story, a story!"

Miss Knaggett sneered perceptibly, the poet said nothing. He would have preferred the cry of "A poem, a poem!"

Von Wolverdenden hesitated with the coquetry of a fine singer when about to "favour the company."

"Oh, pray tell it us!" and Mrs. Goldhall placed her white hand on the great man's arm, as if *that* argument were irresistible. Skinundgrieff looked daggers, and Miss Knaggett squinted pins and needles. It was a clear case that *The Blasted Bud* would not be allowed to unfold its leaves that evening.

"There certainly exists no insuperable objection to my relating this chess-adventure," said Wolverdenden, "but you must promise me your patient attention for a full half hour."

"Yes, yes, we promise!" was the response. A rich man's story as well as his joke is so greedily devoured. Skinundgrieff muttered something to his scraggy neighbour, and, as the servants were now ordered out of the room, filled a bumper of Burgundy "for two." Miss Knaggett liked a glass of wine.

Deep silence prevailed. The millionaire looked slowly round, as if to take in all the party with the gaze of his deep dark eye, and commenced his story.

"When I was a junior clerk in the house of R—in Paris, at 1500 francs a-year——"

The company were transfixed. Napoleon's memorable prologue, "When I was a sub-lieutenant," caused not greater sensation. Von Wolverdenden smiled.

"When I was a petty clerk in R——'s, the narrowness of my finances allowed me to indulge in no amusement but chess; and as a constant *habitué* of the Café de la Régence I had attained a certain degree of force; that is to say, a first rate player could only give me the advantage of a couple of pieces. It is necessary I should premise all this, before I come to my encounter with the emperor. I gave then, all my leisure time to chess; but, to conceal the poverty of my appointments, maintained the most rigid secrecy at the Régence as to who or what I was, and was universally supposed to be living on my means—a mere Paris *flaneur*. Do not lose sight of this fact. Well, I bore my condition cheerfully, practised the most rigid economy as to ways and means, and sat early and late at my desk, during business hours; *existing* on the present, *living* on the future; watching the opportunity to better my hard fate by seizing that critical moment (should it present itself), which they say Fortune offers once at least, in the life of every man."

"I wonder when that marvellous moment will deign to visit me!" interrupted Skinundgrieff.

"It probably has already occurred to you, my dear sir," said Wolverdenden, courteously, "and you have neglected to seize it, in the just confidence of a genius fit to wield the very crash of worlds—ahem! Surely in return for that sublime game of chess of yours, played with the Georgian

captain, he ought to have created you a pacha of three tails, instead of the one you bear!"

The company laughed. The poet forced a smile to Wolverdenden, and cursed him "by all his gods." The capitalist resumed:—

"On the 5th of March, in the year 1815, we were all at our posts in the evening, making up the monthly mail for Constantinople. It was late—between eight and nine o'clock. I was rocking on my very hard wooden stool as usual, scribbling away for dear life in company with some nine or ten other clerks, all of superior grade in the office, when the door flew open, and our chief, R——, stood before us, with a face as pale as a pretty woman's, when the doctor says her aged husband *will* recover!"

"Naughty man!" lisped Mrs. Goldhall.

"Every sound was hushed, every stool ceased to rock, every pen stopped scratching. Something important had evidently happened—some dire event 'big with the fate of Cato and of Rome.' Mexico was engulfed by an earthquake, or Peru was washed to powder by a tornado. R—— spoke, and his voice quivered. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'though I opened not the black-book, I could not prevent others, many hours, from unfolding its leaves. France is no longer France! The whirlwind has smitten her! The thunder-cloud has burst upon our happy shores! I may be announcing to you the ruin of the house of R—— and Brothers!'

"Ruin and R——! The association of terms appeared too ridiculous. We thought the governor mad!

"'Gentlemen,' resumed the mighty Israelite, 'hear me out, and appreciate the magnitude of this communication. Napoleon Buonaparte has left Elba, has landed in France;

the army join him, and his eagles are flying to Paris with lightning speed! I come now from the Tuileries. Louis XVIII., by the grace of God, will be off for Flanders in a few days, as fast as his fat will let him. The ministers are drawing up a bombastic proclamation to issue to-morrow to the people, but I foresee their downfall is assured. The folly of the Bourbons again breaks the peace of Europe, and France is about to plunge anew into a thirty years' war!

" 'Hurrah!' shouted two or three clerks, stanch Buonapartists.

" 'Forgive me, my dear sir,' cried one of them to R——, 'forgive the interruption, but this cannot touch the house. Be yourself. This alarm is surely premature. Hurrah! the emperor must have money. He will want a loan. We shall have the crown jewels, worth fourteen millions of gold in pledge; and the fat citizens of Paris, who swear by the house of R——, will furnish the cash! Hurrah, then! *Vive l'Empereur!—A bas les Bourbons!—Vive Napoléon!*'

" 'Sir,' replied R——, sternly,—'sir, you are a fool! and you talk like the fool you are! The emperor must have money instantly, true enough, too true! but Louis is even now packing up the crown jewels, in case he is obliged to fly to Ghent; trust the old fox for that, and all his private treasure of gold and diamonds to boot. The emperor can offer no guarantee capable of being quickly realized. He will tender me his note of hand—bah! and the Congress at Vienna still sitting! and the armies of the allies not disbanded! and the Russians in Germany! and the Cossacks of the Don in sunny Europe, like vultures eager to whet their filthy beaks in the dearest blood of France!

Sir, you talk like a child! Do you forget our cash operation of last week? Do you remember that in our vaults lie five millions of golden Napoleons? and, doubtless Talleyrand and Fouché will try to make their peace with Buonaparte, by advising that this sum should be seized as a forced loan. Five millions!

“ ‘The allied armies will dissolve like snow beneath the sun of June!’ retorted the Buonapartist clerk.

“ ‘Never!’ cried R——, emphatically: ‘Napoleon has laid too many obligations upon Russia and Austria. They groan beneath the weight of his favours. Benefit a scoundrel, and be sure he flies at your throat when he can!’

“ ‘Prophetic speech! The Austrian requited the preserving the integrity of his domain, by furnishing, some years afterwards, a little kingdom to a little king,—a realm six feet by three, to her beloved grandson, Napoleon II., King of Rome and Emperor of the French! *Vive la haute politique!* Well, excuse my shewing this feeling; I cannot for my life help it. Our friend’s wine here is so excellent, it breaks the formula of cant, and truth will out. I am about to conquer Napoleon at chess! but, from the moment I beat him, I loved him!

“ ‘Yes,’ continued R——, ‘five millions in gold, one hundred millions of francs! My brain reels—the house must go! Nothing but a miracle can save us. Five millions!’

“ ‘But,’ asked the imperialist clerk, ‘can we not hide the gold?—can we not send it away?’

“ ‘And what can we do with it?’ impetuously interrupted R——. ‘Where can we hide it, that its place of concealment will not be known? The barriers are closed, sir, and no person may leave Paris. The moment Napoleon

sets foot in the Tuileries I shall be summoned thither, and this gold will be demanded as a loan. A loan, indeed !

“ ‘ But, perhaps, Lafitte ——’

“ ‘ Lafitte the devil, sir ! To Lafitte’s house I shall be politely invited to send the money. I must give up this vast sum, or perhaps be tried by court-martial and shot for petty treason ! Think you Buonaparte comes this time to play any thing but the game of life or death ? Do we not know the man ! Remember the active part I have taken in arranging the affairs of these Bourbons, and think not my exertions in their cause can ever be overlooked, except by themselves. A hundred millions ! Oh, brother ! my dear brother ! of all men on earth, you alone could save me by your counsel ; and I am in Paris, and you are in London !’

“ ‘ The emperor cannot be here yet, why not send to your brother ?’ asked the imperialist.

“ ‘ The barriers are, I repeat, closed, and guarded by the artillery with loaded guns. I applied myself for a passport, and was refused. The gratitude of kings ! I was refused this by the Bourbons, who wish naturally to delay the heavy tidings of lament for France, until their own personal safety is insured. The peasants love Napoleon, and might arrest them. A hundred millions !’

“ ‘ And no one can then leave Paris ? This is really so !’ ejaculated the Buonapartist, beginning himself to tremble for the safety of his idol, *the house*.

“ ‘ Such is literally the case. None may pass, but one courier for each ambassador. The messenger of the English embassy this moment leaves with despatches for the court of St. James. I have spoken with him, and have offered him 500*l.* to bear a letter to my brother, and the man



refuses! The post, too, is stopped. All is stopped, or will stop. Five millions of gold!’

“‘The English courier is a German named Schmidt, is he not?’ queried the Buonapartist clerk, by way of saying something.

“‘He is! may he break his neck on the road! The moment he communicates his news in London, the British funds fall ten per cent, as they will do here to-morrow morning, and in both cities we hold consols to an immense amount. Oh for some heaven-inspired idea to circumvent this fellow Schmidt! But I talk as a child!—my brain reels! Five millions of Napoleons in our cellars! Oh, my brother! why cannot the spirit of our father arise and stand before thee to-morrow in London, ere the arrival of this courier?’

“The climax had arrived. R——’s heart was full. He sunk into a chair, and hid his face in his hands. The deep silence of profound consternation prevailed throughout the office.

“Now, whatever was the feeling of my fellow-clerks, I cannot convey to you the slightest idea of the revolution which had sprung up in my breast during the foregoing conversation. I had not spoken, but eagerly watched and devoured every word, every look, of the several speakers. I was like the Pythoness of Delphi awaiting the inspiration of her god, my ‘Magnus Apollo’ being my poor 1500 franc salary. Never was there more burning genius of inspiration for an enterprising man than an income limited to 1500 francs? My frame dilated like that of Ulysses in Homer, when breathed on by the sage Minerva; or, to pair my Greek with a Latin simile, I might be likened to Curtius, resolved to save Rome by leaping into the gulph; only as

an improvement upon this latter hero, I fancied I could take the plunge without breaking my neck! Any how, I jumped up, kicked my wooden stool away, and presented myself before R——.

“‘If being in London three hours before the English courier may advantage the house,’ cried I, ‘here do I undertake the task, or will forfeit life. Give me some token of credence to hand your brother, sir, gold for my expenses on the road, and trust to me!’

“‘What mean you? Are you mad?’ said R——, surprised, while my fellow-clerks began to mutter at my pretensions.

“‘I have my plan,’ returned I. ‘Oh, do but trust me! I am acquainted with this courier—with Schmidt. I have a hold on him—a certain hold, believe me! Though I am but the junior here, I will travel with Schmidt, ay, in his very carriage, and will win the race, though I should be guillotined afterwards for strangling him by the way! Time flies, sir—trust me—say I may go.’

“R—— hesitated.

“‘Is he trustworthy?’ asked he of the head clerk, with whom I was luckily a favourite, because I was in the habit of mending his pens, and taking his seven children *bonbons* on New-year’s day.

“‘Wolverdenden,’ answered the head clerk, ‘is as steady as time. He is prudent and clever. I would trust him with my children—and wife too!’

“There was little time for parley. Great men decide quickly. The truth was, I presented myself as a *pis-aller*—a sort of forlorn hope. Even if I went over to the enemy, nothing could be lost, matters being evidently at their worst, and the critical moment all but on the wane.

R—— resolved to trust me. All was the work of a few seconds of time. He took from his finger the carbuncle I now wear, (the stone cost 60,000 francs in the Levant), and placed it in my hand.

“‘Shew the ring to my brother,’ said he; ‘he knows it well; and stay—quick—give me ink.’ Snatching up a slip of paper, our chief wrote in the Hebrew character, ‘Believe the bearer!’ ‘Put that in his hands,’ said he. ‘What your plan is, I know not. You have *carte blanche*. Explain all to my brother. He is the genius of the family. The fortunes of the house of R—— are this day in your keeping. Be thou as David says, ‘a dove for innocence, but a very serpent in guile.’ The courier starts at the stroke of ten. It wants twelve minutes!’

“‘He goes, of course, from the house of the embassy?’ asked I,—clapping on my hat, snatching a cloak from the wall, and pocketing a heavy bag of gold all in a breath.

“‘He does—he does—away with you—away!’ and R—— literally pushed me out at the door, amid the varied exclamations of the clerks. I took the steep stair-fall at half-a-dozen bounds, and in half-a-dozen more found myself in the Place du Palais Royal.

“Through life we find that to narrate important events frequently consumes more time than their realization. Thus it is with me at this moment, and I must hazard weakening the interest of my narrative to state here the grounds of my calculation. In almost every thing runs an under-current, not seen by the world. Schmidt and I were bound together by but a silken thread, and yet on that I reckoned. We were both frequenters of the Café de la Régence, and constantly in the habit of playing chess together.

"Nobody but a chess-player can appreciate the strong tie of brotherhood which links its amateurs. When men spend much time together, they become accustomed to each other, like horses used to run in the same coach. For a fellow chess-player, a man will do that which he would refuse his father and mother. The habit of breathing the same air, and looking at the same chess-board, creates a friendship to which that of Damon and Pythias was mere 'How d'ye do?' This it was upon which I reckoned. Schimdt and I had played thousands of chess-games together, and barely exchanged three words. He no more suspected me of being a banker's clerk, than of being King of the Sandwich Islands. We had mostly singled out each other as antagonists, because pretty nearly matched; and Schmidt loved me the more, as I knew, because it was not every man who would play with him.

"Schmidt was the slowest chess-player I have ever seen. He has been known to sit three quarters of an hour over a move, his head covered by his hands, and then to be discovered fast asleep. In everything he was the same. Correct as the sun; but a slow sort of person, for all that. Schmidt was the kind of man who, meeting you in a pouring rain, says, 'What a wet day this is!' A wholesale dealer in prosy truisms, and nothing brighter; and yet covered all over with a portly assumption of consequence, which famously dusted the eyes of the vulgar. I had ever been a judge of physiognomy, and knew my man. How many Schmidts there are in the world! Excuse my thus moralizing at the dinner-table, if only for its novelty.

"Did you ever see a conjuror at a fair shewing off tricks upon the cards? He shuffles the pack beneath

your very nose as he offers them in detail; but while you vainly think you can draw which you will, he adroitly manages to make you select the very card to suit his purpose. Something like this must be my first step. I had as yet no plan beyond fixing myself upon him, and trusting to consequences; but, under the strong stimulus of my poor 1500 francs salary, I seriously made up my resolve to risk even life itself, rather than rest in my abject position. Who could have so much gold run through his fingers as I was in the daily habit of telling, and not long to see a little of it stick by the way?

"I depended, then, partly on the native force of impudence; or, in words more refined, on the influence of a strong mind over a weak one; that magic spell which Concini at the block owned to having practised so successfully upon the queen, her mistress. You see I am historical, as well as classical—anything but poetical!

"The English embassy at this time occupied an hotel adjoining the Café de la Régence; at the door of which latter temple of fame I planted myself in a careless-looking attitude, with my pulse beating like a sledge-hammer. The night was dark above, but bright below, shining forth in all the glory of lamp-light. At the *porte cochère* of the British envoy's hotel stood a light travelling-carriage. I was in the nick of time. Schmidt was ready, enveloped in a heavy *redingote*. Five horses were being caparisoned for the journey. I went up to the carriage, and addressed my chess friend:—

" 'How's this, Schmidt? no chess to-night? I've been looking for you in the Régence!'

" 'Chess! no, indeed, I've other fish to fry. Have you not heard the news? It's no secret. Buonaparte has

landed from Elba on the coast of France. Paris will ring with the tidings in an hour or two. I'm off this moment for London with despatches.'

" 'I don't envy you the journey!' said I. 'What a bore! shut up in that machine all night; not even a pretty girl to keep you company!'

" 'But duty, you know!' said Schmidt, with a smile.

" 'Duty, indeed! but, perhaps, you light up, *en grand seigneur*, and read all the way? To be sure, you can study our new gambit!'

" 'What a pity you can't go with me!' responded Schmidt, in the pride of five horses and a carriage all to himself. 'What a pity you can't go with me, we'd play chess all the way!'

" My heart leaped to my mouth. The trout was gorging the bait. Schmidt had drawn the marked card!

" 'Don't invite me twice!' said I, laughing, 'for I am in a very lazy humour, and have no one earthly thing to do in Paris for the next few days.' This was true enough.

" 'Come along, then, my dear fellow!' replied Schmidt, 'make the jest earnest. I've a famous night-lamp, and am in no humour to sleep. I must drop you on the frontiers, because I dare not let the authorities of Calais or Boulogne see that I have a companion, lest I should be suspected of stock-jobbing, but I'll pick you up on my return. Now, are the horses ready, there?'

" 'Do you really mean what you say, Schmidt?'

" 'Indeed I do!'

" 'Then I'll tell you what,' said I, 'I'm your man, and famous fun we'll have!'

" I darted into the Café de la Régence, snatched up the first chess equipage that came to hand, and stood in a mo-

ment again by the side of 'my friend.' The postilions were on their saddles, in we leaped, bang went the door, round rolled the wheels, and away bounded our light calash at the rate of ten French miles an hour !

" 'Gad !' said Schmidt, with a grin, 'what a joke this is ! We shall have something in the chess way to talk about for the next hundred and fifty years !'

" 'We shall, indeed !' replied I. For a moment we were stopped at the barrier of St. Denis, and here I became sensible of the truth of R——'s reasoning. The gates were closed, and a heavy force of horse and foot drawn up by the portals. My friend's passport was strictly scanned, and we learned that no other carriage could pass that night, the order being special. I may here say, that throughout the route, thanks to the telegraph, our horses were always changed at the various post-houses with lightning speed.

" 'Good night, gentlemen !' cried the officer on guard, and away we went through the barriers, dashing over stone and sand, rut and road, like the chariot of Phaeton running away with its master. I looked back on Paris for the last time. '*Aux grands hommes, la patrie reconnoissante !*' thought I. Should I succeed, the R——s will at least bury me in the church of St. Geneviève !

" Now at this point, my friends, the chess-board, I consider, was in reality placed between Napoleon and myself, its type only being the chequered piece of wood on which Schmidt, poor fellow ! was setting up the chess-men. By the by, if you ever play chess in a carriage, and for want of the men being pegged at their feet you cannot make them stand, wet the board with a little *vin de Grave*, as we did, and you'll find no difficulty.

" Yes, Napoleon and I were about to play a game at

chess, and, although he might be said to have taken the first move, his attack was necessarily clogged by so much incumbrance, that our chances, at least, became equal. 'To beat the emperor,' thought I, 'all must be risked in a rapid attack, which shall countermine his plans. The position must not be suffered to grow too intricate. My first stroke must be successful, or I may as well throw up the game at once. Nothing, however, can be done for some hours; so, *voyons!* there's a Providence for the virtuous.'

"Imagine for yourselves the details I am compelled to omit. We played chess all night, talked, laughed, and enjoyed ourselves. We supped *en route* in the carriage; and, as my courteous antagonist was deeply engaged in discussing the relative merits of a *Perigord pâté* and a bottle of old Markbrunner, I could but sigh that time had been denied me to put a vial of laudanum in my pocket. Schmidt should have slept so soundly!

"Time wore on. 'Shall I pitch him out by main force?' reflected your humble servant. 'Shall I decoy him forth, leave him like one of the babes in the wood to the care of the redbreasts, assume his name, and dash on alone? Too hazardous. I must take care not to find my way into that dirty old gaol at Calais, where the starving debtors are so everlastingly fishing for charitable pence, with red woollen nightcaps. The Code Napoleon does not allow of 'robbery with premeditated violence.' More the pity! and then, probably, if alone, I could not procure horses. Shall I tell Schmidt the whole truth, and throw myself on his friendship? No; I should be checked and checkmated. We have rattled through Abbeville, we are even passing Montreuil, and I am just where I was. But, stop! a thought lights up my brain. Will it do?



“ Luckily my adversary was, as I have said, the slowest of all slow chess-players—heavy, sleek, and sleepy. This gave me the more time to ruminate, while he concocted his views upon the chequered field; and my scheme, such as it was, became at length matured. While Schmidt the innocent, with his fishy eyes, was poking over the board, how little he thought upon the real subject of my meditations! At this moment some persons would liken Schmidt to the Indian traveller, laughing in the fullness of his joy, while the Thug, his companion, makes ready the fatal scarf wherewith to strangle him; others would compare him to a calf grazing in a butcher’s field. You may liken him to what you will.

“ ‘ Do you cross from Calais or Boulogne, Schmidt?—Check to your king!’

“ ‘ Check? I shall interpose the rook.—Oh! through the Anglomania of the Bourbons, our embassy has worked the telegraph double duty, and at both ports a fast-sailing boat awaits me.—I think I shall win this game. Your queen seems to me not upon roses.—If the wind hold strong south-west as now, I shall prefer crossing from Boulogne.’

“ By this time we had reached that little village, I forget the name of the dog-hole, seven miles on the Paris side of Boulogne. It was half-past four in the afternoon, and we had eaten nothing since our scanty breakfast of bread, butter, and *café au lait*, at eight in the morning. Chess, chess, still had our chess gone on. I knew Schmidt was rather of the gourmand order, and now or never must the buffalo be taken in the lasso; I easily prevailed on him to alight at the little inn of the village, which was also the post-house, for a quarter of an hour, to snatch a hot dinner; which, I assured him, was far better than his dining at

Boulogne and crossing the sea on a full stomach; so, chess-board in hand, away went Schmidt the simple into a dark little back room to study his coming move while dinner was dishing. 'Now or never!' I say, was my battle-cry. I rushed out, and demanded, what think you? a blacksmith! I was gazing on our carriage when the man stood before me. No one was within hearing.

"What a curious thing is a carriage like this, friend!" said I, musingly.

"It is!" responded he, in a tone which seemed to say, 'Have you come from Paris to tell me that?'

"A strange wilderness of wheels and springs, of wood and iron. Now what would follow were that large screw there taken out? Answer me promptly.

"What would follow? Why the coach would go on very well for a few hundred yards, and then would overturn with a crash, and smash all to shivers!"

"Hum!" said I; 'and the travellers would doubtless go to *shivers*, as you call it, also? And what if only that tiny screw there were drawn?'

"The body of the vehicle would equally fall upon the hind axle, but without material consequences; causing, however, some inevitable delay.'

"Are you the blacksmith always in attendance here? I mean if this carriage overturned descending yonder hill, would it fall to your lot to right it?"

"It would!" and the Frenchman's eye sparkled with intelligence. I could have hugged the swarthy man to my bosom. I adore a blacksmith!

"Here are ten Napoleons," said I; 'give me out that little screw, I have a fancy for it.' And the screw was in my hand.

“‘And now,’ continued I, ‘here are ten other Napoleons. I *hope* no accident will happen to us as we leave the village; but, should the carriage overturn, have it brought back here to repair, and take a couple of hours to finish the job in, that you may be sure the work is done properly, you know. And remember, O most virtuous of blacksmiths! that a man who earns twenty Napoleons so lightly has two ears, but only one tongue.’

“‘Assez, assez, mon maitre!’ grinned Vulcan, emphatically; ‘je comprends; soyez tranquille! Allez donc.’

“I pocketed the precious screw, and rushed into dinner while the horses were putting to. Schmidt was so tranquil, I felt provoked I had such a lamb to deal with. I intend that screw to go down in my family as an heirloom.

“We left the inn at full gallop. A very small quantity of pace like ours proved a dose. The body of the carriage dropped gently into ‘a critical position.’ The postilions pulled up.

“‘We are upset,’ cried I.

“‘God forbid!’ said Schmidt; ‘say it’s the English courier!’ The man was so deep in that dear chess. ‘What’s to be done?’ cried he, coming to his senses.

“I had already sprung out.

“‘There seems little the matter, Schmidt. Back the carriage to the inn, and all will be right again in a twinkling.’

“So said so done. My friend the blacksmith assured us he would repair all damage directly; and, while he began to hammer away, like a Cyclops forging thunderbolts, we philosophers coolly resumed our chess in the inn-parlour. The position of the game was now highly critical, both for me and Napoleon, and also for me and Schmidt. My lat-

ter adversary was decidedly under a mate, and his coming move I felt must occupy twenty heavenly minutes. Surely his guardian angel must have been just now taking his siesta.

"I left the room and darted to the stable. A groom was busy at his work.

"'Have you a saddle-horse ready for the road?'

"'Yes, sir, we've a famous trotting pony,—won the prize last——'

"'Enough! I am sent on in advance. Tell the landlord, my friend within settles all. Give me the bridle!'

"I mounted my Bucephalus, and galloped off like the wind.

"'Boulogne! Boulogne!' cried I, aloud, as I raced through the village in a state of ungovernable excitement. I was playing the great game with a vengeance. If that horse yet lives, be sure he recollects me.

"I rattled into Boulogne, the St. Pelagie of Great Britain, and the very *gendarmerie* quailed before me at the gates. In a minute more I had alighted at the water side. The soldiers shouted behind for my passport. I threw them some gold, which, as none of their officers happened to be in sight, they were vulgar enough to pick up from the beach. I cast my eyes around. It was six o'clock, and the scene was deeply interesting.

"The breeze had set in well from the west. The evening was cold, but bright; the air slightly frosty. The sun yet shone, and lighted up the harbour, tinging the far off waves with ten thousand different shades of emerald hue. It was known already that Napoleon had escaped from his prison-house, and was marching on Paris; and the English residents were flying from France like sheep

before the wolf. A golden harvest was reaping on this narrow sea, and I was hailed in a moment by several bronzed fishermen, with offers of service and vaunts of the superior qualities of their several respective vessels. I selected at a glance a stout, trim-looking boat, and leaped on board, leaving my horse to his meditations. I hope, for the hospitality of Boulogne, he was taken care of.

“‘For Dover!’ cried I to the master of the boat. ‘My pay is five guineas a-man; I must have eight men on board in case it comes on to blow. Be smart, fellows, and away!’

“The men were active as eels. The police were about to detain me with some infernal jargon about my passport again.

“‘Cut off,’ cried I, eagerly.

“My captain (if I may so term a Breton sailor, half smuggler, half fisherman) severed the rope which held us to the pier-head, our heavy brown sails were flung to the wind, and we were sweeping across the waters.

“We dashed under the bows of a large English-built packet, straining at her lashings like mad, ready to kick off in ten seconds. Her sails were flying abroad, and several stout hands were at the tacks, ready to haul them home. The captain was reading the very stones and windows of the town, impatiently, through a glass. The mob of idle spectators were so busily engaged watching his proceedings, I was hardly noticed.

“‘A nice craft, that.’

“‘Yes, sir; waiting for the English courier. If he don’t make haste she’ll lose her tide.’

“‘I should be sorry for that,’ said I. ‘Give her a wide berth, and go ahead.’

“And we did go ahead. I have crossed Calais Straits

many times, but never under such exciting circumstances. Every bit of canvas we could stretch was spread, and the billows washed our deck from stem to stern. The men were on their mettle, and the little vessel answered gloriously to the call! shaking herself after each wash like a wild duck, and dipping her wings again to kiss the briny waters. At one moment I verily thought we should have been swamped. My fellows themselves hesitated, and seemed inclined to take in sail.

“‘Carry on,’ cried our captain.

“A little more washing and we were in comparatively smooth water under the chalk cliffs of Albion. By half-past nine I had left Dover, and was tearing along the London road behind four fleet horses. Canterbury and Rochester were won and lost. I took the direction of London, and my carriage pulled up before the gates of R——’s villa at five o’clock in the morning. I had come from Paris in thirty hours.”

“Thirty-one,” here interpolated the accurate Mr. Goldhall.

Wolverdenden smiled.

“The inmates must have thought I had come to take the mansion by storm, so powerful were my appeals to the great bell, as I stood at the gates in the early sunbeams of the morning. In five minutes more, I found myself by the conjugal bed of R——. God only knows how I got there.

“Assuredly the R——s received me as they had never done visitor before, sitting up both in bed, side by side, rubbing their eyes, as just awakened from a deep sleep. I had made my entry *vi et armis*, and, by the time R—— was fully wakened up, had handed in my credentials.

Without pausing a moment in my hitherto successful career, I rapidly explained the circumstances of the case, and minutely detailed the situation of our Paris house. What words I used I cannot remember. Indeed, I spoke as in a state of delirium. I had not slept for two days and nights, and my brain began to reel for want of rest.

“ ‘ Go into my dressing-room there,’ said R——, with the most imperturbable *sang froid*. ‘ Do me the favour to open the shutters, and in three minutes I will be with you.’

“ I retired mechanically; a heavy load seemed already removed from my chest. In every tone of the great man’s voice was something more than authority; there was genius, talent, and power. I felt that our position was fully understood, and so profound was my confidence in the king of the London merchants, I already felt assured we should find relief in his counsels. How extraordinary that so much effect should have been produced by half-a-dozen common-place words.

“ I threw myself upon a sofa. R—— joined me. He wore a scarlet nightcap, and, enveloped in the blanket he had hastily dragged off the bed, looked, with his grisly beard and massive throat, like a chief of the Cherokee Indians about to give the war-whoop. But I thought at the moment of neither nightcap nor blanket; I thought only of Napoleon Buonaparte on the one hand, and R—— on the other; and I would have staked my life on the latter, simply because he seemed master of himself. It is so easy to govern others!

“ R—— was grand, he was sublime! Startled abruptly from his sleep, informed that the whole fortunes of his house were trembling in the balance,—that the mighty European edifice he had for so many years been labouring

to establish was tottering in the wind,—that name, fame, and fortune, were being rent asunder, he was still R—. He was the lion of the desert awakened to battle by the jungle tiger of the East, and rushing at once to the desperate conflict. Only, be it remarked, that lions of the desert seldom appear in flannel, even in the Zoological Gardens."

"Mauvaise plaisanterie!" sneered the poet to Miss Knaggett.

"Coarse person, with his flannel and his nightcap!" responded she of the bones.

Wolverdenden heard not the remark. He proceeded:—

"R— spoke, and in the same quiet tone with which he could have ordered his *maitre d'hotel* to get him a cutlet.

"‘Return to France,’ said he,—‘to my brother with all speed. Spare no exertion at all hazards to be in Paris some little time before Napoleon enters, and all will go well. Your services in this affair will not be forgotten by our house. To thank you here were waste of time. Now mark my words! I have no faith in the Napoleon dynasty. The emperor has returned too soon. The army will declare in his favour, but the nation, torn by war, will not stand by him. The natural cry of France is, ‘Peace, peace! that we may heal up our wounds.’ The emperor may win a battle, but he must fall before numbers, and his fall this time will be for ever. I give him a hundred days reign, and no more. Very well. If I believed in the endurance of Napoleon, I should say, ‘*Make a friend of him—lend him this gold;*’ but as it is, the bullion must be preserved. I know the Bourbons. If the emperor borrow the gold, even in the name of the government, and pawn



the palaces of Fontainebleau and the Louvre for the amount, the others are capable of disavowing the transaction. And although the absolute loss of this sum would not of itself shake us, yet the credit of our name would be severely damaged; a run upon our branch houses would inevitably follow, and we should be compelled to stop payment before we could realize our assets. And yet true policy forbids our now directly affronting the emperor. How then to act? The problem to be solved is this,—to keep the gold out of his hands, and yet to remain friends with him. And thus would I have my brother proceed. Treasure up every word, sir, and digest it *en route*. All paper money in France will now be depreciated. Any premium will be given for gold to hoard during the crisis. We have undue bills to the amount of millions and millions flying about Paris. I pray you mark this, sir. Seek out the holders of our paper, call it all in, and pay it off in gold. The money market will be so pressed, that even our name will be at a discount. Work out this scheme, and watch the result. Every holder of a note of hand will be glad to allow ten per cent. discount for gold. Call in all. Leave not a rag of paper existing in any corner of Paris with our name thereon as acceptors. Should it chance that even then you do not find bills enough come in to absorb the gold, let my brother extend the operation, and discount equally the flying bills of the three Paris houses, marked in his secret memorandum-book as A, B, C. Never mind whether the bills have two, four, or six months to run. I say pay off all. Ferret them out from every corner of Paris. Lock your paper in your desk, and the ship will ride out the storm. How like you the plan, sir? Ha! The bills will be useless to Napoleon. Gold alone

will meet his views, and he must get it through those houses who have been in the secret of his return. Meanwhile, bid my brother be foremost at the Tuileries' levees, and profuse in his assurances of devotion to the emperor, with regret that he has no gold.'

"R—— paused, as if to demand my applause for his plan. I saw it all; the riddle was solved. Success was all but certain. Check to Napoleon! and probably check-mate; for other blows are yet in reserve for him! R—— resumed, with the gravity of a veteran commanding in a battery with the bullets flying around him,—

" 'Tell my brother, moreover, to operate on the French funds for a rise, the moment they recover from their first depression. Operate largely, and in the certainty that the Bourbon star will shine again, in less than four months, brighter, and more enduring, from this dark cloud having passed away. Remind my brother, however, to operate against the emperor only through third parties, and to beware; for Napoleon will owe us a grudge for present proceedings, though at first he will be too eager to court public opinion to dare to seek revenge on our house. And now, away with you, sir, on the wings of the winds; but, hold! what is the earliest hour at which the courier of the English embassy can be at the Foreign Office here?'

" 'I should say, eight or nine.'

" 'Ha!' said R——; 'then stop yet a moment. Thy coming is, indeed, a God-send!'

" Seating himself, R—— hastily wrote and sealed a short note, addressed to Lord C——.

" 'Leave London by Westminster, and hand in this note as you pass Downing Street (of course you know London), to be delivered as early as possible. Lord C—— comes

punctually to business at nine o'clock, and will find it on his desk. It is right that I should briefly acquaint his lordship with the outbreak of Napoleon.'

" 'But,' remarked I (child as I was, compared with R——), 'would you not prefer my leaving it at his lordship's private residence; in which case he will get it at least two hours sooner?'

" 'Content yourself, young man,' returned the chief, with a grim smile; 'obey orders without reasoning upon them. Ahem! he might not like to be disturbed so early. Besides; how do we know he is at home? There; I date my envelope 'half-past five A.M.' Can man do more? And now away, sir. We shall soon meet again. Return by Calais. The Boulonnois might lay hold of you.'

" 'But allow me to remark, one difficulty remains,' observed I; 'I have no passport.'

" 'Oh, I can remedy that in a moment. The English government allow me to keep a few blanks for emergencies.

" 'With R——, to will and to do appeared to be the same thing. He filled me up a passport ready signed, describing me as on 'a special mission;' and we parted with a cordial squeeze of the hand. I can truly say, I neither ate nor drank, in or near the British metropolis.

" 'How shall we drive, sir?' asked the post-boys, as we crossed Westminster Bridge.

" 'Drive,' said I, 'as if the devil were after us!'

" 'Luck was on my side throughout this eventful chess game; for such I contend it was, in the highest signification of the word. Life is chess on a grand scale, and chess is an emblem of life, with its hopes and its fears, its losses and its gains; only, in chess, if you lose one game through a false move, you can set up the pieces and play another.

My chances of checkmating the emperor now increased hourly. The ball was at my foot. It may be said, the greater share of the laurel-branch ought to be R——'s. Never mind, I was not puffed up with pride. Could I have a more worthy partner than the mighty monarch of European finance? It was king against Kaiser, and mine own was at least the hand that moved the pieces.

"Fate was constant throughout my journey. I reached Dover and Calais without an accident, and reeled into our Paris counting-house, more dead than alive, soon after noon, on the 8th day of March. I need not say how delighted was our French R—— at the counsel I brought. All hands went immediately to work, to carry out the scheme. As for me, I went to bed.

"R——'s behaviour was perfect. He made me keep the ring I wore, and thus I gained my carbuncle. More valuable orders of merit have been given by monarchs for services of inferior value.

"To make my narrative complete, I must here trouble you with a chapter of dates.

"Buonaparte had landed in France on March 1, and the news came to the Tuileries, as I have said, by the Lyons telegraph, on the 5th. On the 6th, Louis le Désiré, issued his first proclamation, and ran away from Paris, his loved city, on the 19th. March 12, the emperor entered Lyons; left that city next day; was at Fontainebleau on the 20th; and came into Paris on the same day, at nine o'clock at night. *Le petit Caporal* had covered two hundred French leagues, partly hostile, in twenty days; not bad work, considering a part of the journey was performed on foot, that armies were to be conquered, and municipal authorities harangued, *en route*, in every town. On my part (for, as

I am playing chess with the emperor, I may here contrast my doings with his), I had left Paris on the night of the 5th of March, and was back at my post on the 8th. We were, morally speaking, assured of at least a clear week, even should the troops sent to oppose the emperor unite themselves to his cause. A good deal may be done in a week!

"The success of the house of R—— was complete; and Napoleon, as far as our game went, was irrevocably checkmated. All our gold was paid away; barely a single twenty-franc piece remained in our treasure-vaults. We stood upon our bills, and waited the event.

"On the 21st of March, the emperor had a grand levee at the palace of the Tuileries, to which our chief went, though with a trembling heart. Buonaparte looked at him from head to foot, with any thing but a pleasant expression of countenance, and turned on his heel with this significant phrase, 'I see there are *two* Napoleons in Europe.'

"The courtiers stared at each other, but could not read the riddle. Our R—— saw that his counterplot was known, and appreciated, though not perhaps gratefully. During the hundred days' reign—that meteor-flash of regained power—the emperor took no further notice of the matter, but subsequently alluded to it at St. Helena, in his conversation with Las Casas. He then laughed at the trick, and owned we had completely foiled him. A Napoleon to confess himself beaten is twice vanquished.

"My friend, Schmidt the heavy, never can have forgotten the last game of chess we played together, but was fortunate enough to be able to conceal the thing from his employers. He is still in the land of the living, but we

have never seen each other since I left him studying how to parry the impending checkmate. Should we ever meet, I shall be happy to finish the game, though I have never had leisure to play even a single party of chess since. Chess is a game for the poor, the idle, and the infirm; and, thanks to R——, I am now none of those. A liberal advance of capital on the part of the two brothers of Paris and London enabled me to call into existence the house of Wolverdenden and Co., bankers and merchants, of Hamburg, of which firm I am, as friend Goldhall there knows, the head partner. I have never divulged this affair before; but, after twenty-eight years, feel at liberty to treat it as a matter of history: only, as I should not wish it to go farther, I will thank the company present to respect my desire. The finance of Europe is its very heart's blood, and the multitude should not be too easily initiated into the mysteries of the temple.

“And now, in the manner that conquerors count over their spoils, let me briefly sum up the gains of the R——s. The net is thrown into the waters, and drawn to land; let us tell over the fish taken.

“Firstly, you will take notice, that in our exchange of gold for paper—hailed at the time like the changing of the new lamps for old, in the Arabian tale of Aladdin,—in this exchange, I say, we cleared a profit of ten per cent; making ten millions of francs net of itself. The emperor lost Waterloo,—commerce was restored,—oil was poured upon the waters,—the Bourbons crept forth from their holes, like mice when the cat is out of sight. Gold became a dead-weight,—bills were in requisition for remittal to foreign countries,—the bullion all came back to our vaults,—and we favoured our friends by charging them

only five to eight per cent. premium, for taking the cumbersome burden off their hands!

"The Bourbons were not ungrateful. With an incomparable degree of adroitness, R—— made them see that we had been instrumental in crippling the resources of the emperor! Thus goes the world. In return for our fidelity to the *fleur-de-lis*, we were permitted to suck some of its sweetest honey. The records of French finance yet ring with our gains upon the Bourse, through our buyings and sellings of stock upon this occasion.

"On the morning I bore the news to England, R—— went down to the Stock Exchange of the British metropolis before it opened. He was always a punctual man. At this very time, Schmidt was about to unfold his budget to his employers at Westminster. Acting through agents, R—— operated in the funds to an enormous amount for an anticipated fall. His brokers did all this, while the great man was quietly reading the *Times* newspaper. I will not dwell upon the results in figures. The crop was enormous! At half-past ten A. M., the news came to the Stock Exchange from the government Home Office, and the thing was blown. It was the interest of R——'s brokers to keep the secret, and they did so. In the course of the same day, Lord C—— forwarded to the illustrious R—— an autograph letter from the Prince Regent, thanking him for his personal attention, as well as for his disinterested conduct, in placing his own private information at the service of government, before the arrival of their own courier! Now it is all over I look back with astonishment. We have many great financiers, but no R——. My story is done."

"What a great man was R——!" said Goldhall, with a deep sigh.

"A great man, indeed!" was echoed around the dinner-table.

There was a dead pause—a pause similar to that which sunk down upon the rival fleets at the Battle of Aboukir after the blowing up of L'Orient. The silence upon the present occasion was an offering to the glorious memory of the departed R——.

Owing to the length of the story of Von Wolverdenden, the sitting of the ladies after dinner had almost resolved itself into what the Chamber of Deputies would term "a state of permanency," much to the vexation of our dear friend Miss Knaggett, who prided herself on "the proprieties." The usual thanks were showered down upon Wolverdenden, like wreaths of flowers upon the head of a successful singer. Mrs. Goldhall then gave the customary glance round the table, and rose to leave for the drawing room. During this momentary bustle, the silence was broken, and all tongues were running at once, as if to make up for so much lost time; and also by way of firing a parting salute upon the disappearance of the ladies.

The illustrious poet of the Poles, Stanislaus Poniatowski Skinundgrieff, rushed to escort Miss Knaggett as far as the door, just as the fair hostess, Mrs. Goldhall, was putting this question to the interesting spinster,—

"How did you like the story?"

Miss Knaggett was one of those who love to go off with a *mot*.

"Mon âne parle, et même il parle bien," replied she.

"Balaam's ass spoke once," cried the poet, boldly.

Von Wolverdenden heard the two remarks.

"Most asses never speak at all," said Wolverdenden.



## VINCENZIO THE VENETIAN.

---

### SECTION I.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."—*Job*, chap. 1. v. 7.

You ask me, madam, to tell you a story about Chess; I know one which nobody else knows. A true tale, but very shocking. It relates facts which happened—oh! a very long time ago; before you were born. I know it is true, because I learnt it in a way in which nothing untrue could be communicated; and, when I was in Venice, I saw the very spot where the chief incidents occurred; so, you see, it *must* be true.

Round the giant portals and illuminated entrances of the Buondelmonte palazzo in Venice, during one of the carnival nights of the year 15—, was the throng and pressure of many dark gondolas, from whose cushioned seats a crowd of laughing revellers were rushing up the marble steps of the building, into halls blazing with light and beauty.

All within and above was enchantment. The noblest, the gayest, and the fairest of the city, were mixed in that

perfumed and silken throng. Here, the glittering banquet was spread invitingly forth—there, the dance and song burst joyously abroad. And the women!—beauty, such as Titian or Giorgione could alone depict, was there in its choicest moulds. Dressed in the costumes of every age, with and without masks; shining in jewels, glittering in the velvets of Genoa, and the gems of Samarcand, in the softest silks, scented with the rarest odours,—women were not wanting to complete the scene; dazzling, palpitating, glowing, and triumphant in their charms.—We pass slowly through hall after hall, brilliant with lights, to an inner saloon; where our attention is particularly arrested.

This magnificent apartment is dedicated to play, in all its forms. Cards and dice are dealing, rustling and rattling, while the numerous tables of agate, or porphyry, groan beneath the heavy weight of gold and jewels staked as bets. Little noise is heard, save the deep and sonorous sound of the clashing zecchins, as they are poured from velvet sacks upon the board by the attendant pages, or collected in massive piles, to re-enter their temporary place of dwelling. So vast was the display of wealth, that Belial himself would have paused upon the scene. So profuse was the array of treasure, that you would have thought yourself in one of the caverns of 'Aladdin, or the strong-room of some eastern Sultan—but you were not there.

At the date of my narrative, Chess was at the height of its zenith in the favour of the princes of the earth; and, as well as games of mere chance, was generally played for heavy sums. Priests were advanced to the mitre, court favourites to the pension list, and officers to the

baton, for their skill in this fascinating recreation. Chess was the "shibboleth" of distinction between the peer and the puddle; and a knowledge of its mysteries was as essential then to success in good society, as are now an intimate acquaintance with the red book, and the latest "on dits" of fashionable scandal.

We are Chess-players; and, as devoted lovers of the game, one table, in particular, attracts our attention. On that rare pedestal of silver and ebony, on that massive board of ivory and jasper, stand the mimic warriors, arrayed in fight. The rival players, who conduct the battle, are worthy of a closer examination. Let us look a little at them.

That youth of twenty, who plays the black pieces, is one of the sons of Venice, and stands high on the golden roll of her nobility. His name is Vincenzio di Guadagnaro, distinguished alike for face and form; for varied accomplishments, improvident extravagance, impetuous passions, love of learning and antiquities, wine, women, and chess. During the present sitting, he has already lost gold, houses, and jewels. He has now staked his honour, for having no money left wherewith to wager, he is bound to pay, should he lose, more zecchins by to-morrow's morn than the mighty sum already parted with. Should he fail in redeeming his bond, the scene of life will darken o'er him. From the paleness of his clammy brow, we can fancy him anticipating the only alternative then remaining. If he lose the game now playing—Vincenzio means to die at sunrise.

But who is the fatal mask who plays against him? A woman: and, judging from her arm and hand—her bared shoulders, and ivory neck—one, of a most excellent and

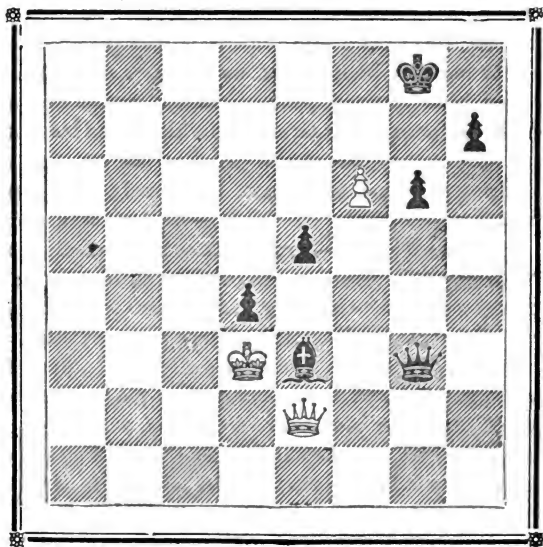
lovely appearance. Yes, she is the Princess del Buondelmonte ; the owner of the palace ; the giver of the fête ; the leader of the fashion—and the queen of beauty in Venice. She appears formed for love, and tenderness, but neither of these sentiments rules her mind at present. Revenge the fiercest, hatred the most concentrated, and triumph the most mighty, unite to shake her frame ; and cause her fingers to tremble so, she can scarce conduct the chess figures. The feeling is mutual ; and either of the two players could drink the very heart's blood of their adversary ; with a feeling which Italian souls can alone appreciate or comprehend.

The spectators stand in a crowd around, awed into silence, and absorbed in breathless attention. Among them is a tall majestic figure, wearing the form and garb of the sons of men—masked, with enfolded arms, leaning against a marble pillar, and carelessly watching the progress of the game, on the side of the lady. That figure is **THE FIEND** ! Not Satan in person, but a sort of inferior demon, like the gnome of the Hartz mountains, but younger, and therefore of less experience. A laughing Mephistopheles-sort of sprite, who has lately set out to make the tour of Europe, and has dropt into Venice to see the carnival. So much to his taste does he find it, he thinks at times he has made a mistake, and stept into heaven !

As the game advanced, the feelings of the players become still more excited. Vincenzo strained his nerves to the utmost, in order to conceal his emotion ; but the sweat of death was on his forehead, and his countenance was whiter than Phrygian stone. Still, he compressed his energies manfully to the task—played a long series of moves in a masterly manner, and shewed himself to be no

unworthy opponent, even when matched against her, whose reputation for chess was unrivalled.

The fair Buondelmonte did not like her position. Her enemy's pawns offered a menacing aspect, and the adverse queen captured gratuitously a knight, and threatened a discovered check. The following was the situation, in which, having the White pieces, the princess had to move. She paused long over the board, and despair went to her heart, for she could find no resource, and Vincenzo had again, she feared, eluded her grasp.



Suddenly the fiend bent over her, and it was afterwards thought, whispered a few little words in her ear. The

lady started with delight, and in the ecstasy of the moment nearly fainted with joy: She played the correct variation, and gave her adversary check-mate in just ten moves.\*

Vincenzio spoke not, but rushed from the room. The beautiful Buondelmonte turned eagerly to embrace the stranger. He was no longer there—though no one recollected having seen him depart.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two hours later in the night, Vincenzio walked in solitude on the Rialto, with all hell burning in his breast. To die was his least regret; but to lose his revenge! O, saints and martyrs!—Was he not a beggar? And had she not ruined him? When mutual love had passed away—when for her sake he had first tasted crime,—had she not betrayed him—scorned him!—forsaken him for another? Had she not brought his father to the block, and his brother to the dungeons of the state? Had he not wrestled with her during the last two years, in hatred? and warred against her, even unto the knife?—Oh! what a conflict was raging in his brain,——when a stranger touched his arm.

“Off, begone!” was the exclamation of the noble; and then at a glance, remembering in the figure before him, the friend of the Buondelmonte, as if his pent spirit had at last found vent, in one instant of time did his good stiletto flash through the air, and strike home upon his supposed foe. The effect of the blow was to produce a hearty laugh; while Vincenzio, abashed and wondering, was struck with mingled sensations of the deepest awe. He shuddered

\* The positions introduced throughout this story, are chess problems by my friend, Mr. William Bone. The solutions are purposely omitted. White is always moving up the board.

and clung to the pillars of the adjoining balustrade for support, exclaiming—"What are you?"

"Men may call me Azaroth," was the reply. "What harm have I done, that you should give me so rough a welcome? It was not I who won your money. True, 'tis hard, bitter hard!—You played for life, and for revenge—and you have lost. A wise man would offer double or quits. Ha! ha! ha!—All may not yet be irredeemable. I am your friend."

"All—all—is lost," sighed Vincenzo,—“but honour!”

"Honour! I like the term. Oh! these men, with their honour! Hark ye, friend, where was your honour just now, in striking an unarmed man with your dagger?"

"From a Guadagnaro, intruders may expect no other welcome. Why name yourself my friend?—What would you with me, fearful one,—say, form of mystery, who evidently holdest life by other tenure than that of human?"

"My purpose is to save you. I like your spirit. Were I the reptile, man, I would be like you."

"Save me! O, never! 'tis now too late. You cannot give me back the past; and without that, the future reckons me little."

"I offer all you wish. Wilt have revenge?"

"Revenge! Can you give me revenge?—revenge on Buondelmonte!—Can you give me her blood?—say—speak—whate'er thou be!—Oh! speak to me! but speak!"

"Ha! ha! ha! see what the tender passion comes to!—You loved her once, and now——"

"Peace, fiend!—answer me—speak, or leave me. May I have revenge?"

"You may, you shall; but hear me patiently:—all that you wish, I give. Revenge, even to the overflowing of the

cup. Health, gold, and lengthened life ; all !—on conditions though ! Wilt hear them, youth ? ”

“ No ! by my soul I will not ! Tell me nothing. For a moment hast thou kindly deluded me from the recollection of my wrongs. Bring me not back to earth directly. Were you in reality—the—fiend !—Oh ! then, indeed ! ”—

“ And if I were, would you accept my boon on these conditions ? ”—And Azaroth whispered in his ear, words, which but to write were mortal sin. St. John of Venice protect us !

Vincenzio blanched not. For a single instant only did his frame quiver—and then he shouted, eagerly, and fearfully,—

“ I will, I do ; so help me heaven and the saints ! I agree to all. Once more—give me revenge ! ”

“ Your noble spirit moves me ; my terms of service shall be lightened for you. All shall be given, youth, at morrow’s dawn. And now retire to rest, and dream of peace and happiness.”

“ Do you leave me thus, Oh, Azaroth ? ”

“ Adieu, Vincenzio, for ten long years. Cherish your lady love, the beauteous Buondelmonte ! And in remembrance of this interview, let me throw on your shoulders a trifling token of my affection. Adieu ! ”

Vincenzio felt something in the form of a weighty chain thrown round his neck. It was a carcanet of sparkling sapphires. He raised his head—he was alone on the Rialto.

Slowly did he pace his way to his couch ; but deep was his sleep, and pleasant were his dreams, on that eventful night.

\* \* \* \*

Vincenzio awoke at early morning, and returning recol-



lection flashed across his brain. His first impulse was to feel for the chain which Azaroth had girt around his neck, and which had remained there, when he flung his frame heedlessly upon his night-couch. The chain of sapphires was gone—but in its place—O horror!—there was the vivid imprint of a chequered line, encircling his throat, like the two outer rows of a chess-board, marked deeply in black and red upon the skin, as if seared with a brand. Vincenzo shuddered, for this assured him of the sealing of the fatal compact. But the Lord di Guadagnaro was of no common mind; and, strange to say, the uppermost feeling at the moment of this discovery, was one of unmixed pleasure. He knew that his revenge was at hand. He started up, and saw before him huge coffers of gold piled to the very ceiling; aye, good, heavy, zecchins of the purest Venetian currency; ducats which bore handling, and did not melt (as he almost feared they would do), at the touch. O Pactolus, mighty river; it appeared as if thy waves had flowed across the chamber. Did Vincenzo think of the gold, while he handled it—while he kissed it—while he rolled in it? No; his joyous shout was for revenge! He certainly had not got implanted in him that love of his neighbour, which is so much more practised in these latter times!

On the gold lay a parchment, comprising an abstract of the conditions of the dark one; conditions accepted by Vincenzo beforehand, and even now registered elsewhere. The spirit of these conditions may be thus condensed:—One chance of respite from the last dread penalty was left. Vincenzo was bound to play three games of chess with Azaroth, (*drawn games not to count*), to be played one game at each sitting, at intervals of ten years. In every case, he was to enjoy a hundred years of happy life, inclusive of the

twenty summers he had already numbered. Should he win either one of the three games, the bond was thereby to be annulled, and he was to be free from penalty; should he, on the other hand, lose all three games, he was to complete equally his hundred on earth, but then ——! O dire alternative! I am almost afraid to go on. Why did you make me tell you this story?

The full amount of the money due was carried by Vincenzio's pages to the Palazzo del Buondelmonte. Its enchanting and lovely owner was sorely grieved at the sight of the gold, and I regret that I cannot tell you more in detail, of that which subsequently passed between her and Vincenzio. Suffice it to say, that three months afterwards, a body was drawn out of the grand canal by a fisherman, which, from its long and heavy tresses, was recognised as the corpse of a woman, even before it saw the surface. It was indeed the body of the Princess del Buondelmonte, so horribly mutilated, that had she not been seen at the festival given by the Doge the previous evening, it might have been supposed she had lain a month in the water, and been half devoured by the fishes of the Lagunes. It is really wonderful what could have befallen her, and who could have been the murderer!

A few weeks afterwards, and the Palazzo del Buondelmonte was inhabited by its purchaser, the Lord Vincenzio di Guadagnaro, whose graceful mirth, flowing spirits, open hand, and kind heart, were soon high for praise in the mouths of men. No prince gave such banquets—no man danced at them with such vivacity. His noble entertainments, united with his courteous bearing and handsome figure, made him the idol of Venice; the chief nobility of Italy crowded round him, and many a tender and timid

heart sighed sorely to wear his chains. Vincenzo gave not all his time to pleasure, but acted up to the motto of "carpe diem," in every possible way. He loved learning, and delighted in the encouragement of learned men. To the study of Chess he became particularly addicted, and invited its first masters, by proclamation, from every quarter of Europe, to visit his palace. All who came were magnificently received, and, if they played well, every sublunary boon was placed at their command. By dint of genius and practice, Vincenzo became their superior. All went merrily with him, and the whole world seemed to lie at his feet. With the ladies he was perfect; they could find nothing about him to scandalize, nor even to wonder at; except, perhaps, that when the fashion came in of wearing falling bands, and collars of Flemish lace, round the bare throat, Vincenzo adopted not the innovation, but continued to close up his doublet as before. I could wager his reason for this was, to conceal that ugly checquered line which was ever around his neck, as left by Azaroth.

---

## SECTION II.

YEARS fled then, as they now flee—like days. Time passed, and Vincenzo's life passed with it. He was nearly thirty years of age, and felt something more than a qualm, when he anticipated the arrival of that point of time, which would complete ten years from his interview with Azaroth. It may be supposed by some, perhaps, as matter of wonder, that the demon had shewn himself already so liberal, compared with his general reputation, but there is no account-

ing for circumstances. As I told you before, Azaroth was only a third-rate devil; mightier spirits could have given him the Pawn and two moves, in guile and craftiness. Perhaps he had, in his composition, sufficient mortality to feel amused by similar adventures; and, besides, who can tell to what extent caprice may work with fiends, as well as men? The latter give ruinously exorbitant prices for a fine dog, a swift horse; and so, by a parity of reasoning, might Azaroth have made his bargain in an extravagant mood. Be this as it may, Vincenzo was no vulgar prize; his was a master mind, and as such, far from now quailing in panic before the coming of his foe, he was nerving himself sternly for the encounter. Young in years, he was old in life; and if his right-hand had been familiar with the wine cup, it had been to the full as intimate with the battle-axe, which he had wielded oft for Christendom, in the wars of Venice with the crescented Turk. The rolls of learning had unfolded at his bidding; and the sages of Arabia and Grenada, hailed in Vincenzo their favourite pupil. Indeed, he had once committed himself with Holy Mother Church, and fallen at Rome under the ban of the Inquisition, for taking part with those who first broached that monstrous heterodoxy, that the earth moves round the sun. But the potency of gold cleansed him of this deadly sin, and he was careful publicly to recant so ridiculous an opinion.

“After all,” mused Vincenzo, in reference to the coming storm,—“there are points about this being, demon or philosopher, Chaldee or magician, be he which he will,—to be reflected on. He cannot be wholly etherial, or why should my dagger have cut his garments, as it did, and only turned against his cursed skin! No fault of mine it went not home, at any rate. Perhaps, after all, my bargain

is a bad one. What was the woman to me? Could I not have left Italy, and thus fled her vengeance? The sun shines brightly on other towns besides Venice. Alas! how differently we see things at different periods of life! But shall my soul be cast down in this extremity? Courage, Vincenzo, if the fiend must be met, let us confront him like the master of evil himself. A game of Chess! Well, throughout Europe, where is my equal in skill? Did I not conquer Bartolomeo of Spain, and Aferger the Moor?—(that splendid player.) Have I not exhausted the whole science of Chess: or, is human knowledge here of no avail? This cannot be, for the bargain is null, unless I have the fullest exercise of my faculties. The church, too, can she befriend me?—I have fought knee-deep in blood for Rome, surely her saints owe me a good turn now? Perhaps this Azaroth may have done the thing as a frolic,—if a spirit,—and may have since forgotten me altogether; he must see so much of life and of the world, how can he bear in memory so poor an adventure? Well, let him come, I shall be here, for nought would flight avail in any case. We play; he cannot cheat me. The contract was made as between men, and must be kept by him accordingly. Ha! well thought, Venetian artifice! Who knows how far he may be human at the time of his visit? Some spirits, I have read, are mortal at one period, and only invulnerable at others. The ducats he gives are corporeal, why may he not be so too? At any rate, no chance shall be on my part thrown away. Even should I fail, it's only the loss of one game out of three, and during the next ten years, I shall have leisure to scheme some craftier plot to foil him, with the help of the experience acquired on the first essay. The field is not yet won, my spiritual friend."

Vincenzio gave his bold page, Montalto, a few private instructions, without revealing his grand secret ; and waited calmly for the thunder-burst. It came.

At the Palazzo Buondelmonte, the nobles of Venice were gathered to a banquet, and the revelry had reached its highest pitch. Vincenzio's laugh was ringing in the saloon, when Montalto presented a jewelled token, sent by a stranger, who waited in his study. It was the chain of sapphires seen before. "Be he accursed ;" muttered the Guadagnaro, as he courteously apologized to his guests for so abruptly leaving them. "Remember me, Montalto, for the time is come."

"Ha, ha, ha !" shouted Azaroth, as Vincenzio entered the apartment. "I feared you had forgotten the purport of my visit ; ten years try many friendships, and break connexions less intimate than ours. Are your chess-men ready ? I have to be in India four hours hence, to meet a Brahmin at Delhi."

At a sign from his master, Montalto placed the costly board of silver and ebony, and the fiend sat down to sport with his prey. Vincenzio felt firm, but sad ; he had oft faced death, but he had now to cope with the spirit of death. For the first time, he looked in the face of Azaroth, whose features at their former interview had been covered by a mask. The expression of the countenance was haughty, scornful, and overbearing, though mixed with many traits of noble feeling, and even beauty. Round his mouth lurked scorn, wreathed in a thousand smiles of sportive malice. His eyes shone with a brilliancy so withering, Vincenzio could hardly bear their searching gaze ; his brow was as the brow of one indented with the blue and burning lightning. Azaroth's age appeared to be that of

a man in the prime of life. He offered the Venetian the move, which Vincenzo unhesitatingly accepted, and the game began. What were the odds on Azaroth?

Have you seen, my friend, that celebrated engraving by one of the first men in Europe—Retszch? I mean the one in which Satan is represented as playing at chess, with man, for his soul. So looked, in some respects, our combatants; and I think they were even the more interesting couple of the two. The man of Retszch's creation is so very good and innocent, hardly worth contending with, even though he have the partial aid of the attendant angel. The fiend of Retszch is a philosopher of the school of Diogenes, and not the prince of darkness intended. There wants the animal about the lower features; and we see by the delineation, that Retszch has but little studied Spurzheim and Combe. Pardon this critique, O, mighty draughtsman, thou who with thy magic graver hast so filled our hearts with frequent sensations of mingled joy and fear. Certainly, thy Lady Macbeth has more of the devil about her, than thy Satanic "Schachspieler."

A few preliminary moves only were played, when the Guadagnaro called for wine, and Montalto presented, in beakers of gold, the bright vintages of Chios and of Xeres. Rather to the surprise of Vincenzo, his opponent drained oft the presented cups. Under their influence, apparently, the dark spirit laughed and jested higher and louder; but, alas! for the Venetian, the more Azaroth quaffed, the keener appeared his view on the board. The page slackened in his service, and Azaroth in his turn, demanded "wine."

Montalto was staggered, and crossed his breast devoutly. "What man is this?" said he to himself. "In his first draughts I have given him poison enough to kill a regiment,

and yet he asks again for wine! My lord's scheme is nought. His enemy doubtless bears some counter-charm, or sanitary potion. I'll try my own plan."

"This wine is fair," quoth Azaroth, "but not so much to my palate as the other. Have you more of the first vintage, Vincenzo?"

"How may I answer thee, most potent? evidently thou art not of this earth!" And Vincenzo bent, in something like awe, over the chess-board.

"Ho! ho! ho!" shouted Azaroth.

Vincenzio started. The page had just struck the fiend from behind, a desperate blow on the head with a Turkish axe.

"Why, page, if I were of puny frame, like thy master, that tap would have given me the head ache, and how then could I have played at Chess? O men of earth, he had need be proof against fire, steel, and poison, indeed, who communes with you!"

Vincenzio sat in silence, and Montalto crept tremblingly out, vowing I know not how many masses to St. Peter, if he should live till morning's dawn. The game of Chess went on with various changes; Vincenzo's skill was proved to the uttermost, but he made no impression, though Azaroth played, scarcely deigning to glance at the board.

"You are improved," said he, "since the night you played with Buondelmonte. Doubtless your practice has been great.—(If you move the knight to the square you meditate, he is lost.)"

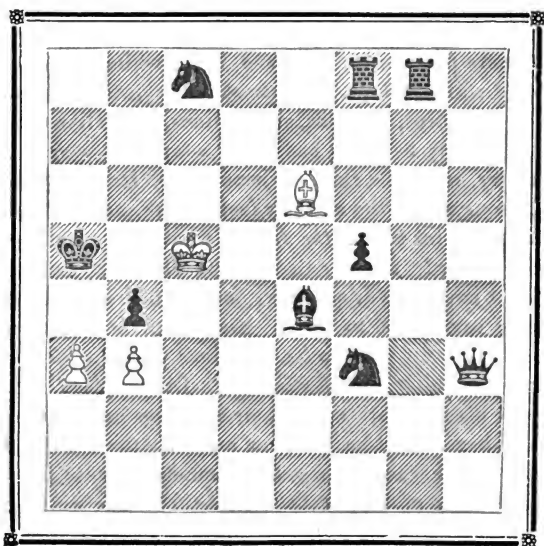
"I fear I am lost," thought Vincenzo. He found his very thoughts anticipated. A change came over Azaroth. He gave away one or two pieces in succession, and Vincenzo almost dared to hope. Poor fool! The wily fiend was mocking him. He sacrificed half a dozen of his chief pieces in a way



which compelled their being taken, and thus fixed all Vincenzo's men out of play. He reserved on the field, but one bishop and two poor pawns, against a mighty force; but Vincenzo then saw, to his horror and amaze, that all the preceding train of sacrifices, had been parts of one deep scheme to secure the mate. The following was the position:—

Azaroth had the White men, and forced the checkmate in three moves. O, how I wish he were a member of the London Chess club!

Vincenzio's sensations were similar to those of a man taken, sleeping, out of his bed, and plunged into a cold bath! "In ten years' time we meet again," cried Azaroth, as he mounted on the wings of the wind. Vincenzo threw himself on the ground, and wept in the bitterness of his despair.



## SECTION III.

BEFORE the age of thirty, man wishes to be older than he is; after that point, he rather desires to stop. To an acute observer, it would have seemed as if Vincenzio del Guadagnaro could do all he wished on earth, except arrest this certain progress of time. Every thing prospered with him—at least as to the outward man; with his soul's health it went, perhaps, indifferently. But the time for caring about one's soul is decidedly yet to come with worldly men, at thirty years of age! At the period of which I write, the nobles of Venice played the part of general merchants to the whole world; and Vincenzio was among the chief of these nobles. His coffers overflowed with gold; his halls were piled with silks and furs; while the sea was covered with his ships. His books, his antiques, jewels, bronzes, cameos, intaglios, and pictures, were alike unique. He was thirty-five, but had never married. Why should he marry, when the choicest beauties of Italy thought it an honour to see him at their feet? Fashion had set her seal on him (*as well as the devil*); what more could be said in his favour? Greater than Julius Cæsar, he conquered without having seen, or come; for the fairest signoras of Venice came first to him! Blest with health, temper, good spirits, and good looks, combined with the form of an Antinous,—all with him was well. Did he play? fortune forsook his adversaries, and their cash was poured into his money-bags. Did he hawk or hunt on the mainland of Italy—whose hawks, horses, or hounds, were so fair and fleet as those of the gallant Vincenzio? The world, too,

could hardly cavil at the golden opinions from all sides showered around him. His was not a carpet life. Foremost in the wars of Venice with the Ottoman, no hand had struck harder at the crescent for the cross. It was really a pity he still had that nasty mark around his throat; but then, no one ever saw it, you know.

The passions of our matured friend continued to rage like a volcano, but the lava's torrent was well kept under command. Ambition opened her portals to his career, and it *was* said—(but the virtuous are always the victims of calumny)—it was whispered, that Vincenzo was not too particular, as to the means he adopted in sweeping from the path such insects as would fain oppose his tread. But as this was seldom spoken aloud, what cared he? And what man, above the low vulgar horde of bread-producers, would be uncivilized enough to say aught against a lord so powerful, and so unscrupulous? One man, a simple merchant, it was said, having discovered a certain political intrigue, inimical to the winged lion, working between the Pope and the Lord Vincenzo, substantiated his case by proof; and sent the packet to the Doge, through the ever-yawning lion's mouth. What was the consequence? This stupid merchant was found strangled next night on the sands of the Lido; and on Vincenzo, in return for the calumny, was conferred the office of Ambassador to France. So much for luck and money.

This run of fortune continued many years, and Vincenzo was elected of the Council of Ten. At a subsequent period of life, he was proffered the office of Doge, but never having fancied matrimony, declined espousing the state herself, however fond he might be of her daughters. It was thought odd, that Vincenzo still cultivated chess

so earnestly. Every quarter of the world was ransacked, in turn, to procure players worthy of contending with him. One particular gallery in his grand palazzo was fitted up expressly as the "Hall of Chess;" and here playing upon a hundred tables of marble, might be seen the first chess players congregated in friendly warfare. All who could play well, were welcome; but none could beat Vincenzio; and none had ever played for so heavy a stake. The skill of our Venetian surpassed imagination. Openings and Mates, to us unknown, were to him familiar. O that we were in possession of the manuscripts he wrote about chess; what a fund of treasure would they furnish for the student. Vigilant in study, and endowed with a rare and docile patience, he appeared to have exhausted the science of chess; and the wonder was, it did not pall upon his appetite. The world dreamed not of his motives for such strict and constant training. The time of his encounter with Azaroth was again at hand.

"All that art could do, I tried before," sighed Vincenzio, one summer's night, as he skimmed the blue waves in his gondola. "Human skill may not avail against that which is superhuman,"—and he sighed again. Were those sighs for repentance? No; he breathed them but in regret. Under the same circumstances, he would have ratified the same compact over again. Let us not be too confident in our own strength. Without the holy help of the saints, you, yourself, Madame, might perhaps have fallen under similar temptation. The greatest have been entrapt in slighter snares.

"Azaroth has certainly behaved with honour; all my wishes are anticipated, with just sufficient difficulties to make the task of victory a pleasure. What could be his

motive for the bargain? At the rate I live, I was, and am his own, without it. Inscrutable mystery! Suppose I leave the country—would he follow me? O yes; too late for thought of flight, the bond once ratified. His omnipotence has been proved to me; and I must once more clothe my features for the meeting, with the courage of despair."

"I call on you to-morrow," whispered a soft voice in his ear, and the tones went like hot iron through the frame. Vincenzo started as if galvanized, but he was alone in his gondola, and nought besides was visible on those blue waters.

And morning came, and with that morn came Azaroth. Twenty years had not changed his countenance, nor added a single wrinkle to his brow. The same withering frown hung over the same malicious smile. The senator Vincenzo was forty years of age; his figure was now full, and his raven locks were slightly sprinkled, as it were, with snow. And oh! the depth—the unfathomable depth—the unquenchable spirit of the wicked. Vincenzo faced the demon with a brow as haughty as his own, and scorned to own his inferiority. In the absence of the moment, he grasped the hand of Azaroth, and was surprised to find it feel as flesh and blood; but his own hand afterwards looked for a time, as though he had pressed live embers.

"I should like to see your Hall of Chess," said Azaroth, "we will play there, if you object not to so public a performance." Vincenzo courteously bowed, and in silence led the way. "It shall never be said" thought he, "that demon or angel could outbrave the potent lord Vincenzo. No; I yield not this advantage, though the grave yawn beneath my feet."

Numerous gazers came around them as they entered the gallery; and when they seated themselves to play, the chief chess players of the company left their games, allured they knew not why, to look on this. The crowd felt that Vincenzo had met with his match; and with that brotherly love for their friends and countrymen, which all good chess players entertain, were delighted in their hearts, at the most distant prospect of seeing their superior conquered. They could not, however, have accounted for the impulse which forced them so irresistibly from their seats.

"Can any of these idlers play?" said Azaroth, sneeringly.

"Peace, I entreat you," replied Vincenzo, who feared anything which might lead to a scene. In how many cases, alas! do we see that the fear of being found out, is comparatively greater than the fear of crime.

"Take the first move, my lord," said Azaroth.

"No; we play the strict game. Draw lots."

This was done, and the struggle commenced. The spectators drew nearer, and there were not wanting some who offered bets on Vincenzo's giving mate in twenty moves; for it was observed, with wonder, that he yielded no odds in advantage. But there was a certain something about Azaroth, which prevented similar wagers from being accepted; much as some of the bystanders wished to flatter their patron, by this oft-seen species of pocket adulation. As the game went on, a solemn awe crept imperceptibly over the minds of all present. Every eye was riveted on Azaroth, as the bird is fascinated before the blighting glance of the rattle-snake. All felt uncomfortable, and wished the stranger at the antipodes, though none durst say so. Meanwhile, the Guadagnaro talked and smiled in bravado; while Azaroth chatted for ten, and laughed for twenty.

"Curse the impudence of the fellow," whispered the young Alonzo di Ortegano, to his brother in arms, Lucenzio di Razzoli; "I should like to pitch him into the canal yonder. Who is he?"

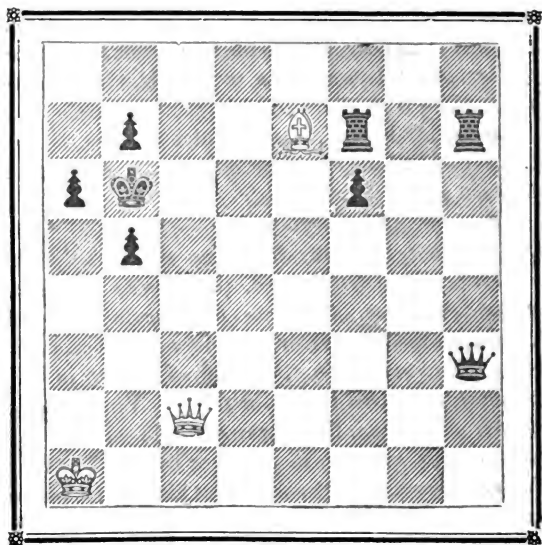
"The devil!" I think, was the quick reply.

"Ha! ha! ho! ho!" screamed Azaroth, grinning like an Arabian goule!

\* \* \* \* \*

And so went the game for many moves. Vincenzo played his best, but felt assured, that play as he might, he must eventually lose. The chess of Azaroth was wonderful; he never made an error when it was important to be correct. His combinations, instead of taking in half a dozen moves, involved twenty or thirty. Vincenzo afterwards was of opinion, that Azaroth could have given the odds of a piece, to any man who ever lived. The despair of Vincenzo was proportionate; but his courage rose with the emergency. He was fighting for his life, both here and elsewhere. He set his back against the wall, and battled like himself.

More and more moves were played, and the posture of affairs waxed on both sides critical, as the situation became entangled. It struck Vincenzo with a feeling of melancholy this time, to see that, judging as mortals judge, from outward appearance, his game was decidedly stronger than that of Azaroth. I say he was grieved, for he knew he was the mock of the fiend. Vincenzo felt like the poor mouse, permitted by the ruthless cat almost to gain its hole, to be suddenly torn back from health and safety. Azaroth had lost in numerical force, and having the white pieces, had to play in the annexed situation.



"My new gondola against five hundred zecchins of gold, that the 'padrone' beats his man," whispered the youth Alonzo to his friend.

"I wager not. It looks well, but White has some checks, both with Queen and Bishop."

"Out upon his checks," cried Alonzo, "the King, when checked, will retire behind his Pawns, and there laugh his impotent adversary to scorn."

"Ho! ho! ho!" interrupted Azaroth, with a mouth like that of Vathek's Afrit. "Depend on it," resumed Alonzo, "Vincenzio has force enough to eat him. What the thick-headed ass has been about, to lose his pieces so in succession, I can't imagine. Have you observed how he



has played lately? I verily think that for the last half-dozen moves, he has put something '*en prise*' every time: and, moreover, has thrust his men so offensively forward, that Vincenzio has been compelled to see their defenceless state, and to capture them also. Oh! of a certainty, this intruder's a mere swaggerer. The next time he plays with our prince of the chess kingdom, the peerless Vincenzio, let the oaf take the Rook." Azaroth at a glance took in the group, and his loud laugh again struck on the ear of his opponent, like the knell of death.

"I shall mate you, my dear Vincenzio,—if you play well,—in seven moves!" And sure enough he did so.

O this Azaroth! what a fine practitioner he must have been! I should never have discovered the "coup." Do you think, lady, you should? Do you see the forced mate in seven moves?

The spectators were inconceivably aghast! They wondered Vincenzio did not propose a second game, and clamorously intreated the stranger, whom they now felt almost inclined to worship, to come again on the morrow: Vincenzio did not join in the invitation; he knew his conqueror would return quite soon enough: Azaroth bowed, and with a grace that would have done honour to Talma, or Taglioni, left the hall. Alonzo followed him to see which way he went; determined, if possible, to make his acquaintance. But when the youth reached the great water stairs of the palazzo, Azaroth was no longer in sight. He certainly must have worn seven-leagued boots!

The friends of the Guadagnaro gathered round, to condole on the unwonted circumstances of his defeat. Strange to say, Vincenzio seemed to care very little about the matter; at least, such was the face he chose to put upon

his thoughts; and, indeed, insomuch as certainty of any kind is better at all times than uncertainty, he felt glad it was over. I say, it seemed to Vincenzo's throbbing brain, that when Azaroth relieved him of his presence, sun and stars smiled upon him, and the deadly gates of darkness closed for a time.

Next day, Vincenzo di Guadagnaro caused his servants to build a mighty pile of fuel, on which he deposited chess men, chess boards, chess books, and manuscripts, whether of parchment or papyrus; the bad and the good, the clever and the worthless. Chess pieces, framed of pearls and emeralds from Persia, others studded with the most costly gems of the east. Many precious relics were there, which, if now preserved, would be worth a king's ransom. All, I know, were heaped by the vexed Venetian into a mighty pile, more fragrant to the followers of our mystic art, than that of Sardanapalus. The pile, complete, was fired by the hand of Vincenzo, and thus consumed to dust impalpable. The Hall of Chess was abandoned and dismantled. The professors and lovers of the "chess" were dispersed with munificent presents, and sought their own homes sorrowing.

Shortly after, Vincenzo made a high and solemn banquet, to which were bidden all the chief men of Venice. Then and there, in a short speech, replete with expressions of the most intense urbanity, did he declare to them solemnly, that if henceforward, any living being whatsoever, of any rank or station, should ask him, the Lord Vincenzo, to play a game of chess, he should reluctantly feel bound to consider it as tantamount to a mortal affront, to be expiated only in death; and he should expect that every such cartel be instantly made good on the spot; with sharp sword, lance, and dagger.

And his friends, hereupon, knowing Vincenzio to be a man very likely to keep his word upon the occasion, acted prudently, and played chess thenceforth without him.

I really find myself, throughout, giving the very words in which this tale was narrated to me, by that worthy monk, Fra Scipione, of the Augustine order, at Venice.

---

#### SECTION IV.

O TIME! time! time! Once more I cry "out upon thy speed!" Generations pass away, centuries revolve; but years, and thousands of years, are but as moments to thee, O time! Like the bubble on the river, is the life of man, and even while he thinks he lives, he dies. When we look forward in anticipation, thirty or forty years seem a little eternity; when we retrace their recollections in our mind, they are but as an hour. That, which gazed on from the distance, was a mountain of Alpine height, is changed, on retrospection, to the merest molehill. Happy the man, who, on thus glancing back, can say, "no matter, I have expended the past years in works of mercy and charity; they will not, therefore, be thought to have been utterly wasted hereafter." I do not think Vincenzio could have said this conscientiously. Do you, fair reader?

\* \* \* \* \*

Yes, the hour is almost come, when, for the last time Vincenzio and Azaroth must fight in chess. When the Venetian must stake down that drop, the most precious in the cup of life—the *last hope*. O help him, holy saints and virgins, when he has to enter the lists with so mighty an

adversary, to combat under odds so fearful. Should he lose the last game, nothing remains. He must pass the remainder of his promised century of little years, grovelling on earth, "weeping and gnashing" his teeth, like a doomed criminal under sentence of death. Yes; since the last coming of Azaroth, nine years and nine months have already rolled away; let us see how it has gone the while with our Vincenzio. "I almost begin to pity him," whispers the gentle voice of merciful woman.

In the outward man, but little change is perceptible, beyond the silvery hue assumed by his curling locks, and the myriads of deep small lines indented on his forehead. Vincenzio's muscular force is not less developed; but, on the contrary, the Antinous has almost become a Hercules. The brow of our Italian is the index of a mind replete with knowledge of the deepest mysteries within our mortal comprehension. Vincenzio bears the outward imprint of a soul within, able almost to grasp the live lightning as it flashes, and mould it to his will. Talent and virtue, you would have said, must be entwined in that man, in everlasting union. To me, who know him better, he seems like a fallen angel, but the thunderbolt has failed to sear the crest it struck. Is all within as it should be? Who can say? His thoughts are impenetrably hidden, and the chequered line is still twined, snake like, round his throat.

Upwards and upwards has Vincenzio never ceased to climb the ladder of rank and fame. Him do men cite, when they wish to point out to their children a model of the rarest worth. The name of the Lord di Guadagnaro is coupled in teachers' mouths with the names of the just—with Pericles or Aristides. Clad in the robes of judgment and enthroned on one of its proudest seats in Venice, he

shines, earth's emblem of the Almighty. The ducal coronet is on his head—a much more comfortable ornament than his necklace.

After the last dire visitation, the first revulsion of feeling was dreadful. Vincenzo went forth in the depths of night, and crawled on the earth like a worm. He rolled himself amid the tombs, and said, "O that I could be as these dry bones." He sailed upon the Adriatic, and cursed his good ship for floating, though he knew that had he plunged bodily into the deep, he could never gain oblivion. The elements had no power over Vincenzo the doomed! Deep, deep, had the arrow entered into his heart—the heavy iron of rage and agony. Under its burden, he withered like a green leaf in fire; and the gay, the majestic presence of Vincenzo, was fearful even as the form of the gaunt vampire of the night; terribly, and unutterably, and fearfully accursed.

A change came over Vincenzo, and his feelings subsided, curiously enough, into stern and indifferent stoicism. Prometheus like, he felt that the foul bird was gnawing his liver; but he folded his arms, and bade him welcome to the banquet. His form was once more portly, his front serene. His heart hardened like steel in the furnace. It seemed as though he had striven with his enemy, and come forth a victor from the struggle. Like the glittering May fly, he basked in the sun, and awaited the arrival of the foe with bitter indifference. O he was a precious specimen of the stuff out of which men are made.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was on the eve of St. Januario, and hundreds of gondolas were skimming over the water. Nobles and peasants in picturesque costume, mingled in the throng. The sky

was 'clear, and deeply blue ; the wavelets still, and the balmy air breathed perfect harmony and love. Among the throng, parading the place of St. Mark, was Vincenzio, the gazed on of all beholders. He was magnificently attired, but his spirit was sad on that fair eve.

The crowd thickened, and like the waves of the sea, were tossed about in almost tumult. An aged monk, in striving to extricate himself from the pressure, would have been borne to earth, but for Vincenzio's saving arm, which restrained the multitude, and supported the footsteps of tottering age to a remote piazza.

"Blessed be thou, my son," uttered the poor old man, in a feeble tone. The words went, somehow, home to Vincenzio's heart. He started !

"O mockery," muttered he, "can I be blessed,—never." Then, checking the full gush of feeling, which, under an almost irresistible impression, was about to pour forth from his lips, he answered, "Thanks, father ; the blessings of the good are as water to the drooping plant."

"Thou sayest well," said the monk, who was evidently a stranger to Venice. "The prayers and blessings of the righteous man avail much. Religion can draw that barbed weapon from the bosom, which has mocked the art of inferior mediciners."

"What meanest thou ? Dost know me, monk ?"

"I know thee not, kind sir. For fifty years I have wandered among Saracens, seeking to save souls. Many strange sights have I seen, many sore trials have I encountered."

"Didst ever encounter Satan in person, good father ? Ha ! ha ! ha !"

"Jest not on such a subject. The fiend has not been

backward to oppose my calling ; but I have smitten him in all his forms, and will smite him again. Many times has he fled before me bodily !" And the monk uttered a short prayer, and crossed himself, with his eyes upturned to Heaven ; while his long silvery locks streamed in the wind. He was the prototype of Abraham, as painted by Raffaele. A sudden thought struck Vincenzo, as he gazed on the patriarchal form before him. He took the arm of the monk, and led him to the palace. They entered by a private stair, and in Vincenzo's study did he pour forth his whole sad story to the listening priest.

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*

Vincenzio clasped the monk to his bosom, and shouted, fearfully and loudly, " I am saved !"

And here I would fain conceal one trifling circumstance in my narration. That monk was never seen on earth again. Whether he fell among thieves, and was slain for the sake of the treasure with which Vincenzo doubtless loaded him, or whether he died lest Vincenzo's secret should be jeopardized by being in his keeping, can never now be known. No man ever saw him leave the Guadagnaro palace, but then he might have passed from thence at night. And even if he were really *disposed of* by Vincenzo, the act becomes a deed of virtue, on being properly considered. For, of course, Vincenzo could only be jealous of his reputation, for the sake of Venice, on whose golden roll his name was emblazoned. And if Vincenzo chose to take this sin upon his soul, for the sake of the welfare of the state, was not his conduct rather praiseworthy than otherwise ? If that was not virtue, I should like to know what you would call it ? There might be certainly one

M

man less in the world, but the earth is very large, and could do without him.

Joy! joy! joy! Vincenzio is saved. How, as yet, you know not, but *I* know, and I say he is saved. His soul is relieved from its cruel burden, and all is joy and happiness. Secure in the secret of the monk, 'tis thus Vincenzio now soliloquizes:—

“There wanted but this, to fill up the measure; to cheat the fiend! and this is granted me. He has read me a hard lesson, I'll teach him one in return. His day on earth is past, let him go back to his darksome caves. Capital joke! I too can laugh now—and heartily. Vincenzio laughs at Azaroth.”

It is matter of regret that I am forced to hurry over many interesting points of the narrative, as originally told me. Let these be supplied and imagined as they may. I pass on to the *denouement*.

At the time appointed, Azaroth came, and felt great surprise at the courteous reception afforded by his entertainer. Far from quailing before the infernal one, Vincenzio stood erect in his presence,—bade him heartily welcome—and told him the time had seemed long since they met last.

“Oh!” replied Azaroth, “the day will soon come, when we shall be more together.”

Vincenzio produced the chess-board and men (prepared for the occasion), and readily arranged them in battle array. Azaroth was surprised at his coolness.

“One thing, man, I shall ever say for thee, that for constancy of purpose, boldness of bearing, and calm resolve, I never saw thy fellow. Patiently have I waited, and much trouble have thy caprices cost me, but I cannot begrudge it in thy cause.”



"You flatter, Azaroth! By the by, you really look younger and handsomer yourself, every time I see you. Move first if you like." Each player pushed his King's Pawn two squares, and to it, in earnest, they went.

"We meet so rarely," said Vincenzo, "I should like to take this opportunity of getting a little information—check to your King—respecting a few mysteries, of which I fain would know something. Science has been ever my idol, as you doubtless know, from your power of reading man's thoughts."

"Of your thoughts, Vincenzo, I am precluded from knowing as much as I could, were we on any other terms. When any little arrangement, similar to ours, has been entered upon, between me and one of you mortals, that very compact screens you, for the time, from all such powers as I still exercise, over such as are now independent of my sway."

"O, you mean to say—par exemple—that you have no power then, however vexed, to do me bodily harm."

"My dear fellow! how can you ask such a question?"

"Oh! because I intend giving you checkmate presently," cried the Guadagnaro, laughingly, "and I should wish to know beforehand whether I dare do so with impunity. That's all. I am a man of peace, but little given to quarrelling, and shouldn't therefore like the chess-board knocked about my head, if you should fall in a passion, my friend!"

"Don't mention such absurdities. Ridiculous! The bargain's a bargain; and I can no more annul it, than you can. Let the game go as it may, you will live out your promised number of years, and none of your enjoyments can be curtailed in any way. Checkmate me! A good joke! Ho! ho! ho!"

"He laughs best, who laughs last, as they say in England," responded Vincenzo, with a slight sneer.—The fact is, he began to hold the poor devil in contempt, for having suffered himself to be gulled. And I assure you, upon my word, Vincenzo was even beginning to meditate upon the propriety of presently kicking his friend down stairs!

\* \* \* \* \*

My pen is sketching a grave fact, and teaching a great moral lesson, but must not spin it out to a novel. Were I a Victor Hugo, or a Dumas,—why, perhaps, I might not let you off so easily. Vincenzo was, I declare, tremendous. He was splendid! He had hooked his fish, gave him lots of line, and played him to perfection. Let me tell you, there are few men who could have found nerve to steer so close to the rocks. The game went on, as the other games had proceeded, and the Venetian felt quite amused at observing how little chance the deepest schemes of man would avail in Chess, against the cunning of Monsieur Diabolus. "It serves him right," thought Vincenzo, "for playing even with me originally. Had he given me the Rook, as I see he could have done, I should have scorned taking this shabby advantage. Upon my soul! it wouldn't be bad, afterwards, to propose playing at the odds of the Rook, for the gain of another hundred years! He said something to me once about double or quits. It were but fair to give him the chance. But perhaps I had better let well alone."

Vincenzio glanced his eye towards a time-piece, which stood on an adjoining tripod,—“We must play quicker,” said he, “for I dine out to-day; and shall hardly have time to dress.”

"O, bravest of Venetians! you shall dine WITH ME some day. Say, is there aught else I can do for thee, ere I leave? To my very heart do I admire thee!"

"Why, since you're so polite, there is a trifling matter you could do, if you would. Take away this cursed black and white line, you have stamped around my neck."

"O, certainly, with all my heart. It is gone even while I speak. The shepherd knows his sheep without marking, after the first time of handling them.—It is your move. If you take my Queen, you will be Mated, my dear Vincenzo, in fifty-seven moves."

"Very true; but I shall not take the Queen." Vincenzo made this move, and many other moves, warily, watching that he did not commit himself, and carry the joke too far.

"You have not played so much chess lately as heretofore," resumed Azaroth. "What is the reason of that?"

"I got tired of it. We get tired of every thing in this world, by turns. Do you know, Azaroth, I'm almost tired of you!"

"Ho! ho!" sneered the fiend!

"Yes; I gave up chess. I was vexed at finding I could not beat you. I am now older, and think differently. I can thrash you, and at your own weapons."

"Admirable!—And how does the world use you?"

"Oh! tolerably. The men are, *entre nous*, for the most part, rogues; shabby, miserable, sneaking, wretches!"

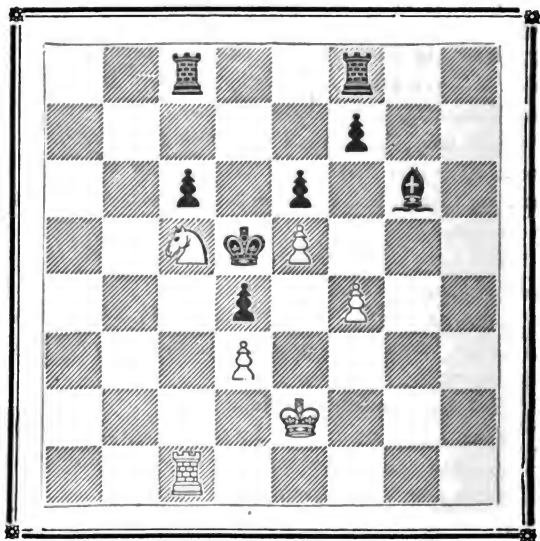
"You may say that," quoth Azaroth; "some of them are so truly contemptible, I give them up. They're not worth trapping."

"But when you catch a prey worth the trouble—"

"Why then it's pleasant," answered Azaroth.

"Hum," thought Vincenzo to himself, "I wish you may find it so!"

And now I must again call in the assistance of a crayon, to pourtray the situation of the Chess-men, while this conversation passed. They stood as follows, and Azaroth, having as usual the White pieces, had to move.



You see, Vincenzo had the advantage of a clear Rook; but position they say, is more than numbers, in Chess.

Well, in this very position, Azaroth suddenly exclaimed, "It's all over. I am about to mate you in four moves."

And the fiend accordingly played the first of these four moves.

Vincenzio calmly examined the situation, and saw, indeed, that mate was inevitable in the number of moves specified. At the same time he could not but admire that superb talent for chess, which, by a series of magnificently forced moves, had thus involved him. The Venetian's heart beat high, and he turned pale with excitement. The sensation was delicious. Revenge never filled a sweeter cup. He glanced over the board, and remained still.

"You see I'm right. Play on."

"Are you in a hurry, my good friend?" asked Vincenzio.

"O! by no manner of means. But it does not matter how you take your next move. Come, play."

Said Vincenzio, in reply,—(now mark!)

"My very obliging friend, and particularly kind patron! Man or devil, be you what you may, moderate your impatience, or you'll certainly fall ill! Listen to me—a poor, humble, mortal. I believe we play according to the strict rules of Chess. Now by those laws, my right of full time to examine the move is quite conceded.—Pray, don't fidget about in your chair so much; you shall speak when I've done.—My next move is rather difficult, that's all. You talk about giving me Mate. You may do so, if you can. When we played before, I lost, through being seduced into moving too quick—a common error with young players. Into this error I shall not fall again. The position requires immense consideration. I shall look till I find the correct move by which I can frustrate your *coup*. Till then I shall not play. I intend to dwell on my next move, perhaps twenty or thirty years: so if you will now retire, and do me the favour to visit me again, at the expiration of about that period, I may then probably have the pleasure

of answering your last move. Or, if you prefer finishing the game by correspondence, I'll send my move, when I've made up my mind, per post, if you leave your address. Meanwhile, I wish you every imaginable happiness. Excuse my rising. I dine out, and cannot offer to take you with me, for you look so cross, you 'd really sour the wine!"

While Vincenzo finished this long, and somewhat flip-pant, tirade, he rose from his seat, and smilingly bowed to his diabolical visitor; waving his hand at the same time towards the door.

The fiend could not articulate a single word. He was struck dumb with the man's impudence. At length Azaroth stammered out—

"Scoundrel and villain! are you in earnest? What do you mean?—Play directly, or ——"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Vincenzo. "In earnest do you ask? Remember my adage, he laughs longest who laughs last. Don't call names; you have owned you've no power over me. I confess myself under great obligations to you, and if it ever lies in my way, shall be too happy to repay them in kind. Meanwhile, demon!" (and Vincenzo drew himself up to his full proud height)—"liar! and father of lies! know that thou art scorned, and conquered at thy own weapons, by a man! I spit at thee, and defy thee!"

Azaroth turned black in the face with rage.—"Monster of ingratitude!" foamed he.

"I am a man!" was Vincenzo's reply.

Pen cannot write the description of the scene that followed. Azaroth forgot his breeding, and scolded like a fish-woman. At length he took himself off in a thunder-blast, which shook Venice to the depths of its watery foundations.

"After all!" sighed Vincenzo, "I have really not behaved well to him!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Vincenzio never saw Azaroth again. Our noble Venetian passed on to extreme old age, enjoying to the last all the finest qualities of youth, together with the varied endowments gained by his unearthly compact. He returned to the practice of Chess, and was fonder of it than ever. This is not to be wondered at. Had it not been his saviour and protector? Chess afforded him the chiefest solace in age, when his iron frame began to yield to time, and in him did Chess-players again hail their master and their patron. And when he knew and felt, that his last days were at hand,—when his appetites were palled—his senses dimmed—and his limbs palsied;—THEN, I say, being ninety and nine years of age, and sinking into death, he received the consolations of the church—was anointed with the holy oil of unction—and expired, as his confessor thus beautifully expressed it, in his funeral sermon:—"in the assured hope of sharing endless felicity, with persons of similar rank and respectability."

\* \* \* \* \*

And now that I have finished this little story, which I have scribbled, my fair friend, merely because you told me it was impossible to twist Chess into a romance, if you ask me to point out the moral of it, I reply thus:—It is a Chess-story, and it is, therefore, rather relative to the morals of Chess, than to the morals of you or me, that its tendency ought to be applicable. And the Chess moral hereby enforced is this:—"Take proper time for the consideration of your moves."

And if you are not satisfied with this moral, Madam, I must beg of you to find a better.

## THE LIGHT AND LUSTRE OF CHESS.

---

"We passed away, like flames that had shone for a season. Our departure was in renown. Though the plains of our battles are dark and silent, our fame is in the four grey stones."—OSSIAN.

THERE is a fashion in literature, as in every thing else; and personal memoirs decidedly constitute the ruling passion of the nineteenth century. Man is more and more craving of scandal, and rabid of auto-biography. He writes his life, or leaves it to be vamped by his executors; with a sum of money, specially assigned by last will and testament to defray the printer's charges. The buffoon who has strutted out his brief part, on the stages of St. Stephen or Covent Garden,—the coxcomb, with or without a handle or tail to his name, who has basked away the best half of his ephemeral existence in the sun of Cheltenham and Belgrave Square,—all pant to print down their doings for the benefit of posterity. The sayings—and sighings—and flutterings, and fussings of a few-score years of—NIL—are recorded with the dignity of Sully, and the exactitude of Boswell.



We are told how the hero of Duck Lane, or Exeter Hall—Ramberlumlumlong, or the Sandwich Islands—fought, shouted, and sang, dressed, dined, and drank; what Uncle Peter said when President of the Locomotive Auxiliary Teapot Temperance Association; how sister Ann mixed the Christmas pudding, and judiciously blended the spices for the gravy. Now, in a Goethe or a Mirabeau, all this were highly pleasant and desirable, but Oh! for the small things to be told off, like tailors, by nines, whose memoirs would absolutely smother us, were it not for our allies, the bacon-seller and the trunk-maker! Yes; posthumous fame, abstractedly speaking, is a very pretty sort of fame, provided it savour not too strongly of bathos. We laugh at its abuse only. In itself, it constitutes one of those creeds which form the salt of the earth. We throw forth this sage paragraph, to prelude a chapter of early Chess biography, interesting to all lovers of this our bewitching recreation.

We need not say, that, personally, we are Chess enthusiasts. That fact has been long known to our gentle Chess-playing public. We love Chess, and all that belongs to it, in the way of retrospect and association; and we are proud to think that our own humble pen has so materially assisted its march during the last ten years. Our theme to-day is a sketch of two bygone Chess artists,—enthusiasts, and even to be called poets; for every science hath its poesy, its ardent devotees, the untiring pioneers of their art. Ridiculous, *per se*, as the mere moneymucks may deem them, yet are such men worthy of the respect of the philosopher. Reduce life to a grave, cold, one idea'd reality,—shear it of its azure hope, its faith in the true, its trustings in the imperishable, its yearnings for the immortal,—and we hold, that earth would become one vast lead-coloured series

of counting-houses and cotton mills; connected by gin-shops, little Bethels, union poor houses, potato grounds, and gaols.

We repeat, that every art has its poetry, and that its innermost soul is enthusiasm. Napoleon was the poet of war; the enthusiast in the science of humbling the mighty. Where find we more sublime lyrics than his bulletins?—their every word searching the pulses like the battle-drum. And, so pigmy is poor man, why should the searching eye of philosophy recognise war as a greater formula than Chess?—the one containing equally the fierce spirit of destruction as the other, without its crimson hue. A vast deal of nonsense is talked about “the higher sciences.” Clear your minds, our friends, of cant. Call up the Jins, and the Peris, the Afrits, and the Dives, and demand whether, to the perception of their advanced and celestial intelligences, all earthly pursuits are not equally vanity and vexation of spirit?—whether they place the conqueror of cities above the maker of mud-pies—the sage who poketh out his sight star-gazing, before Mr. Twiddle performing on his German flute? Away with the delusion! Chess, like the olive, hath not the poison of the laurel leaf. The wheat and the vine feed man’s body; Chess finds recreation for his spirit. Indulgence, then, be granted to Chess enthusiasm.

“Great men were living before Agammemnon,” and great Chess Players were in the flesh anterior to Philidor. Of such, there exists so little printed memoir, it is matter of increased marvel that all there is, has not been earlier set forth for the benefit of these latter times. Chess players, generally speaking, are of quiet habits; caring less for notoriety than most other classes of men. The Chess-board is their world, and they look but little beyond its sixty-

four squares; likening them, it may be, to so many different countries. Respecting Ponziani, Lolli, Greco, Del Rio, and many more of the Chess *élite*, we know absolutely nothing beyond the fact that they shone as stars of the first magnitude in their galaxy. In general, when we contemplate in review the long series of ancient Chess names, immortalized by their talent and acquirements, we must, indeed, content ourselves, perforce, with quaint Burton's pertinent reflection,—“Looke how nightingales sang of old, cockes crowed, kine lowed, sheepe bleated, sparrows chirped, dogges barked, so they doe still. We keep our madness still, play the fooles still; we are of the same humours and inclinations as our predecessors were; you shall find us all alike, much as one, wee and our sonnes, and soe shall we continue to the last.” Solomon Ben David expresses the same sentiment, and teaches us that as it was in the beginning, so it is now and ever shall be, and that there is verily no new thing under the sun.

The fragment of Chess history we are about to translate for the first time from its original Italian garb, may be likened by the really warm hearted in the cause, to a pearl of price left unnoticed for above two centuries in its under-wave cavern. It treats of the two celebrated Chess Players, Leonardo and Paolo Boi, so renowned in their day as to have won the names of THE LIGHT AND LUSTRE OF CHESS. The biographer of these paladins is Dr. Salvio, whose rare treatise was printed at Naples in 1604. Aided by a subsequent author, Carrera, we now present a narrative, offering features of a peculiar interest, both to the Chess amateur, and general antiquarian. Why should the souls of the heroes always dwell in darkness?—“Let them ride around us in clouds; let them shew their features in war.”

Of Dr. Salvio himself, and Italian players of rather a later date, we may take another opportunity to speak. Let the Neapolitan's own voice now be heard :—

During the pontificate of Gregory XIII., of pious and blessed memory, there was dwelling in Rome a young man, by name Leonardo de Cutri. He was short in stature, of mild and pleasant manners, and from this was known as Il Puttino ("the little lad"). Leonardo had been sent by his parents to the City of the Pope, to study the law ; but took up a preference for Chess, in which his progress was so rapid, that notwithstanding his extreme youth, he speedily acquired a degree of force which enabled him to conquer every player in Rome.

Now the first Chess Professor of this time in Europe, was Ruy Lopez, surnamed the learned clerk of Zafra ; who being in high favour at the court of Philip II., of Spain, had been recently endowed by that monarch with a benefice, and had been consequently forced by custom to come and tarry some short time in Rome, that his nomination might receive the sanction of the holy Pope. During this space, Ruy Lopez could not resist the desire to shew his skill, and sought out the resort of the first Chess-players ; playing with them day by day, and winning of them all, until they confessed their joint inferiority to the then absent Leonardo. At this, Ruy Lopez challenged the Puttino to the field, and they played many beautiful games upon even terms ; but at length the wily skill of the youth gave altogether way before the experience of the veteran, and our brave Leonardo was defeated to his great disgust ; while to his failure was added much scorn on the part of his adversary. The Puttino hoped next day to take his revenge, but was again defeated with renewed expressions of pride and scorn ; and was so mortified, that he suddenly left Rome for Naples.

During the next two years Leonardo remained in Naples, constantly employed in the study and practice of Chess ; and, finally,—attaining so high a degree of perfection as to be certain of now being able to conquer his ancient enemy, Ruy Lopez,—resolved to seek out the latter, be he where he might. Meanwhile, Ruy Lopez, having succeeded in getting his grant of the benefice confirmed, had left Rome for Madrid ; whither Il Puttino prepared to journey, first resolving to visit Cutri, his birth-place ; and with this view prevailing upon Don

Fabrizio, the Prince of Gesualdo, a Chess-player of great skill and renown, to fill his place, during absence, in the famous Neapolitan Chess Academy (or Club).

Now it chanced that the famed Chess-player, Paolo Boi, termed from the place of his birth, Il Siracusano, being himself as yet a young man, and fired with generous ardour at hearing everywhere of the Puttino's fame, had left his country at this time to measure his own force with him; and arrived in Naples resolved to see which was the superior in skill. Boi obtained next day an introduction to the Prince Gesualdo, in whose house he found several games at Chess going on. He concealed his name, and sat down to watch the progress of one of these parties played by Leonardo and the Prince himself, without Paolo's knowing the Puttino was really present. The game appeared to be won by Leonardo, but Gesualdo, who had the move, might have drawn it by a deeply hidden stroke of play, which Leonardo perceived, but doubted its discovery by his adversary. In reality the correct move was overlooked by the Prince, who lost the game. The Puttino then told him there had existed one sole means of drawing it, but that the move was so darkly difficult, it could only be explored by quite a first-rate player. Now our brave Paolo had seen this move, and thereupon remarked, that with the gracious permission of the Prince, he would undertake to draw the situation in question. This consent being willingly accorded, the position was replaced, Leonardo feeling assured of victory, not believing it possible the stranger could have found out this stroke of skill; but at the first move Paolo clearly convinced him that he had seen all. The Puttino then said aloud, "Leonardo, methinks thy foe is correct, but let us watch whether the end correspond with the beginning." Well pleased was he of Syracuse thus to discover he was in the presence of his rival, and replied aloud; "I were not Il Siracusano, had I not perceived this thing, and glad am I to have discovered the move which draws the game thus, and thus and with pleasure I inform the Signor Leonardo that I have come here from Sicily, generously moved by his just fame, to measure myself against him; and I beseech him to grant my request, with the license of the Prince, that it may be proved which of us is the best master of this most *onorevole passa-tempo*."

*Il buon* Leonardo accepted the challenge with delight, when he

knew from what renowned player it came, and the match was at once entered upon; the Prince and his honourable lady taking conspicuous seats as spectators, and a crowd of players occupying the space around, moved thereunto by the great reputation of the combatants, and laying heavy wagers of gold on the event. The Syracusan gaining the first move pushed his King's Pawn two squares, and being answered with the same, offered the King's Gambit, playing up the King's Bishop's Pawn. Leonardo took the Pawn and defended it, and the strife was fully engaged in. After playing many games, the parties rested with equal honours; having each won the same number, and certain others being drawn: the result affording "gran gusto" to the Prince, and the other distinguished players present. Taking leave of the Prince, the renewal of the battle was appointed for next day, and the event was anxiously expected by all. It was agreed by the judges that Puttino shewed immense knowledge of the game, but played slowly, while Paolo directed his blows with greater rapidity.

Evening of this day being come, Leonardo considered that the Prince would not now suffer him to leave for Cutri so quickly as he could wish, and therefore resolved to sail in early morning, leaving excuses for the company. This he accordingly did, engaging a bark for the voyage, and reaching Cutri in safety, where he was joyfully welcomed by his friends and relatives. We must here relate, that after a few days thus happily spent, a certain Turkish corsair landed a band of men at Cutri, and carried away captive many Christians, among whom was a younger brother of Leonardo; but the pirate announced by placard that the prisoners might be ransomed; consequently next day a multitude of the relatives crowded on board the corsair's vessel to release their friends. Leonardo, among others, reaching the galley, entered upon terms with the Rais, (the Turkish captain,) who agreed to restore his brother for the sum of two hundred ducats, which Leonardo accordingly proposed to pay, but casting his eyes upon the poop of the vessel, saw to his great joy a Chess-board, and thought that well-known implement would better serve his turn to pay with, than a purse of hard cash. The Rais, carefully following his looks, demanded if he could play chess, and Leonardo replied that he knew the game; on which the Rais challenged him to engage. They sat down forthwith to the board, and the stake was fixed at fifty

scudi (crowns) per game. Now Leonardo quickly won his brother's ransom, and two hundred ducats besides, to the great wonder of the Rais, who piqued himself on being an excellent practitioner, but whose marvel was complete on Leonardo's shewing him a few of his own peculiar stratagems. The noble Rais hereupon restored him his brother, as agreed, and honourably paid him his two hundred ducats to boot, soliciting Leonardo, with earnestness, to accompany him to Constantinople, with the assurance of generous treatment, and a safe return with great wealth to Cutri. Leonardo gratefully refused the proffer of the Turk, and went home joyfully with his brother, being well content with the adventure. After prolonging his visit yet a few days, the Puttino then sailed for Spain, with Giulio Cesare da Lanciano, but passing Naples by the way, halted for a short space of time at Genoa.

Arrived in this fine city, Leonardo inquired out the Chess-players, and attached himself in particular to one Signor Giorgio, a nobleman of wealth and pleasant conversation, beloved by all who knew him, and particularly by the Chess amateurs; since, although Signor Giorgio did not play chess himself, his wife and only daughter were both of them ardent admirers of the game. Struck by the charms and talents of the young lady, Leonardo felt the most passionate love, and, finding it to be reciprocal, the secret consequence was a solemn promise of marriage on both sides; but it was agreed to defer this till Leonardo's return from Madrid, by reason of his then comparative state of poverty, and the nobility of her father; it being hoped Leonardo's visit to the Spanish court might place him in a position to demand publicly the hand of his beloved. So Leonardo departed for Marseilles, leaving his friend and follower, Giulio Cesare, at Genoa, as a medium of correspondence with his secretly betrothed bride.

Embarking anew at Marseilles, Il Puttino came to Barcelona, where he fell in with Tomaso Caputo, surnamed Il Rosces, a beautiful Chess player, who indeed playing even, was easily overcome by Leonardo, but who, receiving the Pawn and move, conquered our hero. Il Rosces was a countryman of Leonardo's, and a very agreeable man, thoroughly versed in the customs of Spain. He introduced, moreover to his acquaintance, Signor Giovanni Rodriquez, another compatriot, and a fine Chess-player; and as it happened the two friends were

going to Madrid likewise, it was arranged Leonardo should journey thither along with them. But a curious adventure here first presented itself.

In the suburbs of Barcelona dwelt a very skilful Chess-player; hight Il Mucciaccio, who, by concealing his real strength, and other unworthy stratagems, had won at Chess of Signor Rodriquez a very large sum of money. It was therefore resolved, by our new trio of friends, before proceeding to Madrid, to punish this base man for his conduct; and the plot being laid, it was artfully carried into effect as follows:—Rodriquez and Rosces went first alone to the house of Mucciaccio, and be it noted that Rosces spoke the Spanish language so well as to be mostly taken for a Spaniard. The former being then asked by Mucciaccio as to the cause of this his unexpected and speedy return, answered that he had just met with his friend Signor Tomaso, a Chess-player, and that wishing to play together, they had found no fitting place, and had therefore come to the dwelling of Signor Mucciaccio. At this pleasant news, the Spanish Rook felt delighted; resolving to pluck them both, feeling confident of his own superiority, Mucciaccio accordingly furnished the friends readily with Chess-men and board, and these being commodiously placed and arranged, they began forthwith to play, the master of the house looking on, and continuing to converse. Rodriquez and Rosces were content to play a few indifferent games, even, and appearing dissatisfied with the result, appointed to renew the combat next day; thus closing the first act of the drama, the end of which was to be spoiling the spoiler, and skinning the fox.

Next morning they returned accordingly, and were joined by Leonardo, in sight of the piazza, beneath which the Spaniard awaited their coming. Leonardo appeared not to know them, and made as though he had merely inquired his road, as a stranger, and had then joined company as having a passion for Chess. The four being thus assembled, Rosces sat down to play with Leonardo, giving our hero a pawn (as secretly agreed), and thus they played two days, still pretending not to have been previously intimate. At the end of the two days, Rosces came off the winner by many games, and receiving a heavy stake of Leonardo shared it openly with Rodriquez, as if the latter had gone halves in the risk of the wager.



On the morning of the third day, Leonardo, as concerted, came to the abode of Mucciaccio, before his friends, and the Spaniard eagerly seized the opportunity to invite him to play Chess. Leonardo refused, saying that he did not wish to tarry in Barcelona, being a gentleman visiting the court of Spain, and that as he had begun to play with Rosces, he should prefer continuing to battle with him, although merely a casual acquaintance; also, that he did not care to lose above a hundred or two scudi. But, here, Mucciaccio pressed him so strongly, that Leonardo deemed the season was come to ripen the design; so these two sat down to a game at Chess together. After a short space of time came Rosces, and Rodriguez, who pouted and sulked, as if angry to see another snapping up the pippin they had plucked from the tree: our brave Leonardo so managing matters as to have lost a single game to the Spaniard at fifty ducats, in paying which sum forthwith, he took good care to shew a heavy purse of doubloons; proclaiming ostentatiously, that he should give up Chess altogether, when he had lost the contents of that purse. Mucciaccio, cast his thirsty eyes upon the doubloons, and continued to play; yet purposely keeping concealed his full game till he had won in all a hundred and fifty ducats. This done, Leonardo led his victim by feigned discourse to play the next game for double or quits; on fighting out which they made a drawn party, and then a second drawn game. The next party was lost by Mucciaccio, and Leonardo being returned his hundred and fifty ducats, an engagement was made for next day; the Spaniard now secure of gaining a large sum, and many gentlemen being invited to see him pluck his pigeon. On the morrow play being commenced at heavy stakes, Leonardo cunningly put forth his whole art, and won all together on that sitting seven hundred scudi of his adversary, yet still so as to make the latter think he lost each time rather through his own error, than through the superiority of Il Puttino. Quitting Chess for that time, Leonardo and his friends resolved to depart from Barcelona at midnight, fearing to be rendered an ill turn; which flight they safely accomplished; paying their tavern bill, and leaving a letter for the discomfited Mucciaccio, in which they told him he must not be surprised if the crafty fisherman sometimes became himself a fish. Moreover, the scroll redde, that in his conscience the Spaniard must know he deserved his fate for having taken

in the unwary, and that if his unholy gains yet exceeded on the whole his present losses, he ought to make his peace with God, by giving up the balance to the poor. Lastly, Mucciaccio was given to learn the names of his late opponents, and was informed they were suddenly off for Madrid, whither, if he would come, his money should all be returned with their blessing, provided he could win it back.

On this journey of our three friends to court nothing remarkable happened; save, that sleeping at an inn, the last night on the road, with other travellers, they chanced upon a landlord who played chess well, and being in the habit of thereby fleecing his guests, this man thought craftily to do the same by the present company; coming off, unfortunately for his schemes, upon this occasion, with the loss of more crowns than paid the reckoning of all the travellers together. Next day, Leonardo and his associates came to Madrid, and took lodgings at the house of one Donna Isabella, a friend of Rosces.

Thus, being fortunately arrived, they rested a few days, informing themselves as to where the great Chess-players held their chief meetings; and, particularly, whither Ruy Lopez for the most part resorted. Then, on the morrow, they went to the place indicated, and found Ruy Lopez himself playing with an amateur, to whom he could only give the Pawn. Many nobles and gentles were looking on, and a courteous reception was given to the strangers; the person of Leonardo being forgotten by Ruy Lopez. The visitors were asked if they would play Chess, and Leonardo answered that they had come to Madrid only for that purpose, provided they could find their equals. At these proud words, Ruy Lopez raised his eyes, and contentedly seeing that they were Italians, fancied much was to be made of them, so assured them that he, for one, was ready to play upon their own terms. Leonardo then took up the speech, and declared himself prepared to play Ruy Lopez, without odds, at fifty scudi the game; whereat the spectators doubted whether he were really strong, or only conceited; but, being a stranger, they suspended their judgments, and the then opponent of Ruy Lopez, declaring himself content to stop for the time, Leonardo took his seat and began to play at once, gaining the first move. The company anxiously looked on the while, eager to see the result; and finding the play ran equal, and the first game indeed drawn, began to respect the newly-arrived professor.

Not intending to win that day, Il Puttino made an even fight, and the contest being adjourned to next morning, was content to come off from the second engagement a winner of one game on the balance ; continuing to play day by day, gaining generally one surplus game of each reckoning. Thus went matters, and the fame of Leonardo was bruited through court and city ; many of the first lords attending to witness games so interesting ; some taking part with Lopez, some with the Italian ; Rodriquez and Rosces failing not the while also to play with the Spaniards as they best might. But Leonardo throughout refrained from coming off any one day conqueror, more than in the one game, on the whole ; studying his adversary's tactics, and reserving his full force to be exhibited upon a more interesting occasion.

The news of this Chess tournament flying abroad, came presently to the ears of the brave Girone, the competitor and equal of Lopez ; who, hearing of the hard blows being dealt out to his compatriot, travelled hastily to Madrid from his residence in a neighbouring city, eager to look upon the renowned Italian. Coming to the place of meeting, Girone found a crowd of gentlemen assembled round his friend Lopez, awaiting the arrival of Leonardo, who, with his companions, never came too early, not to betray greed. Girone inquired of Lopez, as to the game of this new rival, and learnt that it was deeply learned. He also received full particulars of past events. The company then besought of Girone that he also would encounter the Italian, to which he willingly consented ; and Leonardo being now in presence, a sort of chess pool was formed for good stakes ; the three great artists playing by turns together, and indiscriminately. Here the superiority of Leonardo over the other two shone indeed confessedly ; and the battle being renewed at intervals, he won a thousand scudi. The Puttino then played against them both together, Lopez and Girone taking counsel ; and the result was, to the great delight and enjoyment of the spectators, that although Il Puttino had the best of it single-handed with either one, yet the two together were strictly his match ; since neither could he win of them, nor they of him ; as proved in frequent and prolonged encounters.

Leaving Il Puttino to rest quietly for a few moments on his laurels, we cannot forbear glancing transiently over

the varied narrative just presented, of what may be termed his toilsome ascent to the very apex of Chess fame. The manner of the narrator, Dr. Salvio, has a good deal of Defoe about it; the simplicity of his details stamps them with an air of profound and literal truth; confirmed by the date of Salvio's publication, so closely pressing upon the heels of his merry histories. Who would think that mirth could be fashioned out of Chess?—but laughter we hold to be one of the chief distinguishing marks between man and brute. Deep thinkers delight in a jest, while the hooded owl wears its all of profundity upon its shaded brow. Our paladins, in the scenes before us, roam from clime to clime, and sea to sea, in quest of adventure, like true Knights errant. Is there a lady's heart to be won at Chess?—Leonardo is the gallant to essay that spell's solution. Is there a pirate to be conquered?—a bearded Turk to be shaven and shorn?—our Youth caps the crescent with the cross, and converts the Chess-board for the nonce into a veritable exchequer,—paying his ducats *out of that*, and charging handsomely for the lesson to boot. Beaten at first by Ruy Lopez, Leonardo naturally feels “great disgust!” and, like the wounded bird, seeks his family nest; biding patiently his time, till strong enough to *have another shy*. The final issue of this remains to be told.

The entrance of Paolo Boi upon the scene is highly and essentially dramatic. He could not repose in his bed for the reputation of Il Puttino. It haunted his waking thoughts; it pervaded his midnight dreams. Earth is narrow for the haughty of soul; it may not hold *two* Paolos. The quiet air with which he first reveals his presence to Leonardo is delightful. “Had I not perceived the *coup*, then were I not the Syracusan!” One can

fancy the sensation produced by these words in an era when feeling and impulse were all in all. The uprising of Byron's Dervise in the Pasha's hall not less "amazed the sight," than we may suppose would be the effect of the Syracusan Chief's thus emphatically dashing away disguise, and proclaiming proudly his identity. The glove, so chivalrously offered, is no less courteously raised; no vain delay is sought for, no respite given. The lists are fixed on the moment, and the Prince and Princess do the honours of the field; preparing doubtless the victor's prize in this interesting tournament. Our combatants do their devoir manfully; shivering their spears like porcelain, and bearing themselves as valiant champions. Neither party gains the ascendancy, and the honours of the day are shared between them. We yearn, nevertheless, slightly toward him of Syracuse, as being the more rapid fighter, and the gallant proposer of the dangerous Gambit. Paolo Boi will re-appear upon the scene. Leonardo sails away in the night; whereat we doubt not a few sharp glibes were cast at morning. We will not—we dare not—believe the Puttino feared to renew the battle; but Ruy Lopez, like night-mare, was sitting yet heavily on the soul of the Italian; and the Spanish adventure, as the first vowed, was the first to be prosecuted to the end. Paolo would keep.

The Scapin-like manner in which poor Mucciaccio undergoes the operation of skinning were worthy of the craftiest Greek at Tattersall's. We *hope* that the Spaniard was only visited by way of retribution, but *fear*, from the masterly strategy of his foes, that they were by no means too particular as to the qualities of their victim. There is a touch of "leggism" about this adventure, which we wish could be effaced from the Puttino's

escutcheon. The white robes of Caissa are dragged through the dirt. Guzman d'Alfarache and Hardy Vaux frequently put their hands into other people's pockets, believing they were their own: and so, in *one* sense of the word, they were. Mistakes *will* happen to the best intentioned men. In our own day, a friend *sometimes* takes a worse umbrella than that which he leaves. We fear the Chess principles of our worthy trio had a good deal of Macintosh in their composition;—they would bear stretching. Be this as it may, the scene is worthy of Boccaccio; and the parting letter, together with the bolting in the night to avoid a Spanish stiletto, form a retreat as masterly as that of Ney and Eugene through the black forests of the Berezina. The *naïve* fear of being done “an ill turn,” which prompted this step, reminds us of Cellini's beautiful simplicity of expression when he tells us, that quarrelling with a friend he drew his dagger, “and gave him three or four good cuts across the face.” Oh! for the old times of our forefathers! Arcadian groves, lambs, nymphs, and swains!

But the time has come when Leonardo shall meet his ancient victor face to face. Ruy Lopez recognises not in the grown man, the stripling who once bearded him so unsuccessfully in Rome. Very proud is the bearing of the Italian. He erects his crest like the battle horse when he hears the trumpet;—“I come to play Chess, provided I can find my equal!”—salutation simple and stern; enough to make the company, as it did, open their eyes with wonder. Leonardo aims at creating a sensation. Revenge is a very sweet morsel to us all; but especially so to an Italian. It will not be enough merely to defeat Ruy Lopez; but he shall be pulverized and ground to earth; him, and his whole Chess-playing generation. Well, a

good hater is a good thing. We love an open foe. Killing in the dark suits only with souls of muck. Leonardo tosses down his fifty scudi, and at it they go, like two fighting bulls on the mountains of Andalusia. The craft of the Italian now in managing his winnings is admirable. Here, we enjoy the sweet delusion in which he suffers the Spaniard to rock his soul to sleep,—the end thereof bearing an intent above money-catching. “He may be better than I,” thinks Lopez, “but I doubt it, as he only wins an odd game; and after a few more trials, he’ll break down, like most young players, before my experienced patience and skill.” The noble Girone comes to the rescue, but falls by the side of his friend. The result of the Chess-pool, in which Leonardo unmask his full force, and sweeps away the thousand scudi, reminds us irresistibly of De la Bourdonnais, who first came to the knowledge of his own Chess-strength, playing a similar match with Cochrane and Deschapelles, each staking a Napoleon on the board every game. “When I saw the gold,” said De la Bourdonnais to ourselves, “I felt quite a new man; I went at it in earnest, and out of twenty-one pools, won eighteen!” But let us return to our *muttons*, and resume Salvio’s history.

Now the tidings of these things came to the ears of the good King, Philip II., who would not believe it possible his favourite Ruy Lopez could have found a conqueror; and the Monarch accordingly determined himself to see the two play together. Hereupon the day was fixed, and the champions were brought into the royal presence; Ruy Lopez being introduced by a grandee of Spain, and Leonardo by the Count Crancio. Bending in lowly reverence, the King commanded them to rise, and to play upon a certain table, so that his Majesty might well and clearly overlook the moves; fixing the conditions of the

match that the first winner of three games should receive a thousand scudi. Engaging then upon these terms, Leonardo purposely lost the two first games; upon which the King rose to leave the apartment, with an unfavourable opinion of the skill of the Italian; but Leonardo threw himself on his knees, with these words—"I beg your Majesty not to go, for that which I have done has been purposely contrived to display my skill the more clearly. Your Majesty shall behold that of the three following games, I will win them all, and that without much difficulty; and this I undertake to perform on pain of losing life. Know, moreover, O King, that for this thing came I hither purposely, having been moved thereto by the unseemly deportment of Ruy Lopez, when he conquered me, some time back, in Rome." At this speech, the King consented to remain, and then, indeed, was the proud boast of Leonardo made good; he winning the three games in succession, and thus honourably fulfilling his bold engagement. The King thereat greatly admired the Italian's skill, and covered him with favours! presenting him on the spot with the thousand crowns, as also a richly ornamented jewel, and one of the royal ermine mantles; bidding him moreover ask what boon he would, and it should be granted. Hereupon Leonardo gratefully thanked his Majesty for so much kindness, and demanded that his country should be freed for a certain number of years from all fiscal tribute; which the Monarch was graciously pleased to accord, fixing the time at twenty years. And thus terminated the meeting, to the great satisfaction of the whole Court. Lastly, it is said by Signor Ricupido Scodes, a famous Chess-player, and friend of Leonardo, that after the death of the latter, the jewelled ornament, bestowed by Philip, fell into the possession of the Signor Don Carlo d'Avalos, whose wardrobe it served to beautify.

And so the day of retribution has come and gone, and the star of Ruy Lopez has paled and withered before the fiery advent of the Italian meteor. The catastrophe is worthy of its antecedent. When shone chivalry forth more brightly? The passage of arms between our heroes is a duello to the death; a striking home with sharpest sword and spear. Like two of Arthur's Knights con-



tending in the listed jousts, each champion has his squire by his side ; the guerdon to be reaped not being merely the thousand crowns, though that be a gift right royal,—but a prize combining name and renown, present and future—a word in the mouths of present men—a fresco on the halls of time,—a writing on the marble scrolls of posterity. To appreciate fully the magnanimity of Leonardo, we must remember that he assuredly could not have rendered his adversary a full Pawn on each game, and played, Damocles like, with the sword suspended over his head. Philip was not a monarch to be lightly sported with. Disgrace was certainly at hand ; a disgrace of the bitterest quality,—should the brain reel and falter but for a single moment, under the intense pressure of this demand upon its powers, while the Court-champion, Lopez, fought upon roses, caring to win but one game out of the remaining three. Glory then to the wreath so gallantly won, and praise to Spain's ruler for his noble acknowledgment of the proud triumph of genius,—and honour—immortal honour to the pure-minded Puttino, who would ask nothing for himself, but claimed a remission of taxes for his beloved Cutri ! O Chancellor of the Exchequer—lord of Downing Street,—what sayest thou to playing us at Chess this very day for our window rate ?

Salvio's graphic chronicle reads on ; and the sturdy Paolo Boi comes to avenge, fate willing, the conquered Spanish Bishop.

Now when Leonardo quitted Naples, Paoli Boi had remained some time in that city, to learn tidings of the Puttino's success at Madrid ; and with that resolved to journey thither himself likewise in quest of fame and glory in Chess. Embarking, therefore, with a trusty follower, the Syracusian departed ; arriving at Madrid immediately after the

foretold passages had occurred between our Puttino and Lopez, undergoing many curious and strange adventures by the way, of which space allows us but to record that our brave Paolo was taken captive, and carried as a slave to Algiers, though instantly released. Great grief was the Syracusian's, on hearing, at the Court of Madrid, of all that had passed, that his coming hither had not been earlier, and he eagerly inquired out where Leonardo might be found. Passing then suddenly to the place, as directed, the Sicilian lighted upon Il Puttino playing Chess with Girone and Lopez; and not choosing to disturb the party mingled quietly with the witnesses, looking over the play patiently; until the battle, being drawn, was adjourned unto the morrow. Rising from his seat, Leonardo was then made suddenly aware of the presence of *il buon Paolo*; and springing eagerly towards him, embraced the Sicilian with such demonstration of lively joy and affection, that all around thought he was a near relative. The first emotions of the meeting over, Leonardo informed the company of the name of the visitor; describing and commending his great acquirements in Chess. Paolo thanked our brave Leonardo for this favorable expression of opinion, but being naturally of haughty mien, drew up and coldly replied:—"Signor Leonardo, at the game of Chess I have yet one rival, and I now come to the Court of Spain with no other view but to encounter him, resuming the contest we began long ago in Naples; determined this time to know which of us two shall wear the crown, and who has made most progress since we played in the palace of the Prince Gesualdo." These proud words being spoken in the face of the whole assemblage, Leonardo calmly and gallantly replied, that it would be his greatest pleasure to accept the cartel so nobly offered; and that the next day should decide the event between them. And then for the time they separated.

All the principal Chess-players attended the morrow with especial interest, but an unforeseen calamity frustrated their expected gratification. When Leonardo returned that evening to his dwelling, he found his faithful follower, Giulio Cesare, the same whom he had left behind at Genoa to conduct the correspondence with his so dearly-loved fair one. He had come to Madrid with the heavy tidings that this lady had passed to a better life; commending her last words to her adored Leonardo. "*Tell him,*" said she, "*that it pleases Heaven to*

*break our contract; but that up to the present moment, I have been, since his departure, in every respect his loved and faithful consort."* This spoken, with a sigh, she turned to the wall, and said no more words till death.

At this sad news, the now unhappy Leonardo was torn with the most violent grief; weeping a torrent of tears all night, refusing every sort of comfort. Finding himself utterly incapable of playing Chess, he sent word next morning, by his friend Rosces, to that effect; requesting the generous minded company to excuse his apparent breach of promise; alleging, with necessary concealment, that he had just learned the death of his mother. Such being the case, Paolo Boi played Chess with Girone; producing some beautiful games, and finally coming off the winner of the conquering party. The general judgment was pronounced, that Paolo played much faster than Il Puttino, and with greater brilliancy of combination; but on the whole perhaps, less solid and sound; hence the Lords of the Court wonderfully desired to see them matched together. However, Leonardo vanishing for a space from the scene, the Syracusian played alternately with Lopez and Girone, and then against the two united in counsel; coming off with the same success as Leonardo had previously reaped. As for the latter, meanwhile, finding his grief rather to increase than diminish, he resolved to leave Madrid altogether; first placing his gains in the safe custody of Signor Conte Crancioni; and so departing with his follower Giulio Cesare for Lisbon, without being equal even to take leave of the Court. It must be added, that Leonardo here addressed letters of sincere condolence to his dear friends at Genoa; so bereaved of their daughter. Arrived in Lisbon, the Puttino rested some days, his soul still torn with dolour, for love of his lost lady; and finding no relief but in solitude; to enjoy which he frequented constantly the lonely sea-side; breathing his sad thoughts there, at times, in poetic soliloquy.

Now it fell out, that a certain Portuguese gentleman, of congenial mind, frequented the same solitary retreat; and as he appeared to Leonardo to be equally heart-wrung with sorrow, a mutual interest ripened speedily to friendship. The Portuguese Cavalier spoke Italian perfectly well, and Leonardo was courteously received, after kind entreaty on the part of him of Lisbon that it might be so permitted, as a guest in the house of his new found friend. Next morning having

attended mass, they perambulated the streets of the city, where the Portuguese kindly pointed out those objects most worthy of notice; and then, having dined, besought Leonardo to tell him the story of his so-evident woe, promising, in return, to relate his own cause of present misery of heart. Leonardo consented, and narrated all that had happened since he left Cutri; on which the benevolent stranger much condoled with him, and tendered all the consolation in his power; confiding to the Puttino, that he also was labouring under the affliction of losing a dear lady by death; having previously had to combat with the blow of finding a former love unfaithful. The Portuguese moreover shewed Leonardo many sweet poems he had composed to his solace, upon the ingratitude of the one, and the death of the other. Likewise he congratulated himself on having made the acquaintance of so great a Chess-player as Leonardo; he being himself fond of the game. He said the Puttino would find his account, in Lisbon, in Chess; the King Don Sebastian, being passionately attached to this recreation; and having at court a professor of great repute, called Il Moro. This discourse naturally brought on an immediate game of Chess, the self-same hour, between the two now fast friends; and Leonardo shewing forth his skill, the Portuguese was confounded with wonder and admiration. He promised to employ his best efforts that Leonardo should play with Il Moro in presence of the King; but thought it best the two champions should first try their skill in private; which he did not doubt to effect, being a personal friend of the Moor. Accordingly it was arranged that Il Moro should come to play a match with Leonardo, at the house of the Portuguese.

Like wildfire, the news flew over Lisbon, that an Italian Chess-player had the hardihood to encounter the famed Il Moro on equal terms; and the appointed spot for the meeting was thronged, at the time fixed, by eager spectators. Whither also, the Moor being come, Chess commenced; the parties playing even, and both chivalrously disdaining less fierce modes of assault than the Gambit of King or Queen. Leonardo not caring to win the first day, the result was perfect equality; which being reported to the King, Don Sebastian, that monarch was graciously pleased to desire the valorous champions should play in his presence. This being effected, Leonardo

manifested indeed his prowess ; beating Il Moro in many games ; which gave the King very great content, by reason of the pride of the Moor ; who would never allow his equal in Chess could be met with, and now demanded his revenge of Leonardo. The contest being renewed on the morrow Leonardo again came off the decided conqueror ; on which the King heaped many favours upon him, and gave him the title of *Il Cavaliere errante*, because, like the Knights of old, he went about over the earth, to humble the proud, and lower the repute of those of rival pretensions.

Leonardo dwelt some months with his friend at Lisbon, and then returned to the Court of Madrid ; recruited in health and spirits, and eager for the promised encounter with the Syracusian. His reception was enthusiastic, and the narration of his doings while at Lisbon gave universal pleasure. Many lords and gentlemen awaited the coming of Leonardo to the Chess "conversazione" at Madrid ; and every obstacle being removed, he sat down seriously to play with Paolo Boi, in presence of the first amateurs and professors of Spain and Italy. The battle continued during three whole days, night alone dividing the sittings ; during the two first days the champions were even ; but the third day Paolo was conquered ; which was, indeed, ascribed generally to his being unwell, or some similar cause. However this might be, stung with defeat so unwonted, Paolo Boi suddenly left Madrid next day for Italy ; telling no man that he was about to go.

The Syracusian having thus departed, Leonardo remained yet a few days more at Court, and then left, accompanied by Rodriquez and Rosces, both in high spirits at the result of the campaign ; and Il Puttino having with him a considerable sum of money. Unequal to again beholding Genoa, Leonardo would not stop there, but went straightway to Naples, where the party arrived in safety. Here they met with those great players, Michele de Mauro, Il Beneventano, l'Ametrano, Il Traino, and Il Genovini ; all perhaps slightly inferior to Rosces, except Michele de Mauro, who played fully equal to him ; and thence many friendly battles between the two. Leonardo remained permanently in Naples ; having the honourable appointment of agent to the Prince di Bisignano. We must here be pardoned for anticipating the history of Paolo Boi, to relate, that after the latter subse-

quently became released from his captivity in Algiers, he returned to Naples; and played again many times with Leonardo, in presence of the Vice Roy, the Duke d'Ossuna; making always even games together. Leonardo finally left Naples to return to Cutri, his birth-place; and there, at the Court of the Prince di Bisignano in Calabria, was miserably and unhappily poisoned unto death, through jealous envy, in the 45th year of his age. Leonardo and Paolo Boi were styled the Light and Lustre of Chess.

And this, then, was doomed to be the ultimate reward of genius—a poisoned chalice! Thus was the Light of Chess to be extinguished in the pride of life;—hopes yet unblown—roses but newly budded—laurels barely wreathed. Surely an existence devoted to a sport harmless and innocent as Chess, deserved a better fate. We had not thought the hot breath of the aspic would seek to taint a flower so hidden as the lowly violet. Poison, given in the good old times, generally soared at higher game, and left the dagger for the vulgar. But Envy thirsted for the peaceful blood of the Puttino, and drugged the draught; and Destiny willed that Italy should thus lose her younger chosen son of graceful Chess. Peace to thy manes, gallant Leonardo; we love and venerate thy memory. Be thy Calabrian tomb planted with the cypress and the willow; and may the night-bird warble thy dirge through long, long centuries of rest! Peace to the good and the chivalrous—Envy itself respects the tranquillity of the grave. Our historian, Salvio, dwells not on this foul murder, life being ever rated at a low price in Naples and Calabria; but continues his narrative of the deeds of prowess done subsequently by Paolo Boi. Him, too, as Chess enthusiasts, we love in all reverence and honour, and will forthwith follow in his Knightly wanderings.

In the brief history we have just run over, it is worthy of note in what romantic vein Fate displays her heroes in conflict; poisoning their merits so as not to depress all for the sake of one. The second coming of the Syracusian to battle is admirably delineated. Salvio works in chalk only, but to the adept, what expression is there in his rough crayon outline! There is no ambiguity, *no mistake*, about Paolo. He springs upon the scene with the vivid reality of a thunderbolt. His pride is the honest, sublime, emanation of a genius conscious of no superior. Paolo comes prepared to mount the victor's car of triumph, or to die in the amphitheatre. There is nothing of shiftiness about the Syracusian; *shuffle* lives not in his strong simplicity. He will neither take nor render grace; he never *plays pretty* with a rival. The speech of Boi runs in the simple phrase interchanged between the Douglas and the Percy at Otterbourne,—“One of us two must die.” Homer's deity covering her favoured hero with a cloud to snatch him from the spear-stroke of Achilles, appears again to interfere upon the present occasion.

The never-erring archer bends his bow, the death-shaft falls in Genoa; and Leonardo is abstracted from Chess and worldly cares, by the sudden and irremediable loss of her he had loved in life so well. We sympathize with his position; but nature's voice insists on being heard; the scene thus closing in the spirit of true poesy. The warriors are sundered for a season. We care not; knowing they will meet again. The throne of Chess awaits the conqueror; but his chariot wheels must tarry for the nonce.

In some odd out-of-the-way French book, or another, we once met with the startling assertion that “*pigeon is a cure for grief*; “*for*”—proceeds Monsieur, the author—

*" whenever I fall into very serious trouble, JE MANGE DEUX PIGEONS, ET JE ME CONSOLE !"* The Chess-board is the "pigeon" to Leonardo; he plays Chess, and is comforted. O bounty of Nature, and O virtue of Chess! Be not too severe upon him of Cutri, O ye admirers of broken hearts, and charcoal-choked lovers. The heart of man is inexplicable, and at times most pliable. It may not always rend asunder. In the case of Leonardo, there openeth in his breast a safety-valve, and his grief vents itself in passionate outbursts of rage upon the turbaned Turk. The haughty Saracen, "Il Moro," sustains the shock of Leonardo's fierce sorrow, and falls, like a tree upturned by the storms of the West. The Othello of the exchequer lies low; and the enemy of the true faith is humbled in his pride. Joy to the conqueror, and to Sebastian, the judge of the field; who subsequently fought, himself, in sterner scenes, so well for Christendom.

Diana's pale lamp wanes, suns rise and set, and Leonardo returns a "wiser though a sadder man," to Naples. His reception is kind; and as though his departure had been but of yesterday. Foremost in the throng to greet his arrival is the valiant Paolo. Not a moment of time must be wasted. Fate may again cruelly separate the brave. The proudest hour of life has dawned for the heroes of Syracuse and Cutri. Their ready blades are at once crossed; Paolo and Leonardo confront each other at the Chess-table. Madrid looks on in silent admiration, at this battle of the "glorious three days;" during the first two of which the issue is so evenly balanced—the scale so nicely poised. The third evening gives victory to Leonardo. "At length the strength of Swaran fell; the King of the groves is bound."



Yes; the Syracusian is overborne; but exult not too much, O people of Cutri! Bear your triumph with modesty, brave Leonardo. Not you, but destiny, has conquered Paolo. Malaria of the marsh, mist from the fen, have stricken Boi. He is out of health, and hence comes unwonted defeat. Light and Lustre of Chess! Brothers in Arms, Paolo and Leonardo, ye are equal in force, as shall be thereafter proved by many a stubborn contest. Neither one of ye is better than the other. Widen then the sculptured frame, ascend the throne of Chess, formed to receive ye both, and rule its denizens in peace and amity; bound together for your lives by bands of most enduring friendship. Of the two, if made to pronounce, we should even give our voice for the noble Syracusian, that he take the higher place upon the dais. Sympathy with misfortune is so justly due to Paolo's long-tried qualities of excellence. The Syracusian, however, scorns all sympathy. He forsakes the haunts of man for a season, and refuseth to be comforted. Our limits narrow. Leonardo is murdered at the age of forty-five. His name alone remains, bright as the Syrian star. We follow forth the fortunes of the Syracusian, now incontestably sole lord of the ascendant in Chess.

Paolo, the Syracusian, having departed, as spoken, came to Barcelona, and there, embarking in a small vessel, was taken captive by certain Algerine pirates in the Gulf of Lyons; together with some other Christians, who were in his company. Being then, by God's will and good fortune, at once led away to Algiers, he had the felicity to be made over to a Turkish lord of great rank, of gentle and amiable manners. His master carried him at once to his palace, informing him, that all he and a fellow slave would have to perform in the way of duty, was to receive, and usher in, his numerous visitors. Here, to

the great delight of Boi, many nobles came to play Chess continually, and finally, Paolo, seeing that his master constantly lost large sums upon the game, drew him on one side, and told him in a few words that if he would grant him his liberty, he, Boi, in return, would put him into a certain way of winning much wealth (*molti danari*). The noble Turk agreed, provided Paolo could prove his assertion; and requested first to know what he purposed. Paolo then developed his Chess-skill, to the very ravishment of the Padrone; and their subsequent plan was thus arranged, and carried into effect. The conversazione being thronged with amateurs, Paolo and the Turk played together at the odds of the Knight; which brought all those quickly around, to admire the great skill of the stranger, and naturally induced many others to wish to encounter the Syracusian. The latter thus had the opportunity, of which he skilfully availed himself, to win a few hundred scudi, before the whole force of his game was appreciated; and, then, allowing freely the most immense odds, Paolo won a much larger amount. The Padrone and Boi then made the tour of the Kingdom of Algiers, realizing many thousand scudi; subsequently to which, the Turk freely allowed the noble Syracusian his liberty; presenting him to boot with two thousand zecchini, and a pass of safe conduct. Quitting Algiers thus in triumph, Paolo returned to Syracuse, and thence to Naples, where, as has been narrated, he resumed his battles with Leonardo, and other leading "artistes;" taking up his residence at the mansion of the Duca d'Urbino, from whom Boi received the yearly fee of three hundred scudi of silver. This continued some time; and not only Rosces, the Mauro, the Beneventano Domenico de Leonardi (not the Puttino), and others now contended constantly with Paolo, but I, too,—I—Salvio, entered likewise the lists; being then a young player of promise, and receiving like the others a Pawn as odds. Anon, a curious adventure befel the great Syracusian at Milan. He there chanced to engage in a certain Chess-match with one, a stranger, who at first was the gainer; upon which, our Paolo, not being able otherwise to divine the reason, ascribed the matter justly to necromancy, and pronounced certain prayers before renewing the fray; which orisons were duly efficacious, as Boi then came off the winner. Finally, the very last time, I, Salvio, played Chess myself with Paolo, he rendered me no odds whatsoever;

and it so chanced, that during one very complicated and difficult game, he saw that he could forcedly win my Queen in five moves; I observed this also, but further remarked that in two moves more, I could also force his Queen in exchange for a Rook, and come off with a drawn game. And so, even as I have said, was the stroke played out; Paolo gravely observing thus:—"Youth hath greater capacity than age. Thou, O Salvio, art in the very flower of life; for me, I am above seventy years of age, and will therefore henceforth tranquilly repose upon mine already acquired honours." Three days only after this, it came to pass that Paolo the Syracusian died, being poisoned by his servant for the sake of his money. Paolo Boi was then buried with all due honours at the church of San Luigi, near unto the Palazzo Reale.

Poison again! Foul work, my masters!—These were then the "good old times" of which our grandsires vaunt! Envy walks the earth in every age; but at least has now learned to respect the life of the body, strive as she may with her foul fangs to tear and rend the spirit of man. Well, the curtain has fallen, the play is done. Leonardo of Cutri has gone before—Paolo of Syracuse followeth after. The light and lustre of Chess are for ever quenched and sunk in deepest ocean night. Youth could not save itself from—age might not avert—the dastardly hand of the assassin. We dwell no longer on this, but proceed to eke out Salvio's portrait of the noble Paolo, from the subsequent sketch written by Carrera, in the year 1617.—Carrera speaks:—

In the time of our fathers, we had many renowned Chess-players, of whom the chief in estimation was Paolo Boi, the Sicilian, termed equally the Syracusian, from the place of his birth. He was born of a noble and wealthy family, highly endowed with the gift of letters

and the capability of acquiring knowledge; whence it came to pass that he made a rapid progress in Chess, and soon dismissed to the rear all other Syracusian players. Seeking, then, fresh foes to conquer, Paolo visited Spain, then the resort of the greatest Chess professors; where he was honoured by the bounteous favour and countenance of the chief lords of the kingdom; as well as of the King, Philip the Second, himself no mean lover of this recreation. As I have said, Paolo was already superior to every other player in Sicily, and could also play well without seeing the Chess-board; in which art he was indeed remarkably eminent, conducting three games at once on as many different boards, conversing pleasantly the while, with the company, upon general subjects. Before going into Spain, Boi travelled through Italy, contending everywhere with the principal Chess-players, and especially with the far-famed Puttino, Leonardo, with whom he may be classed as equal, seeing that Salvio terms them the Light and Lustre of the profession of Chess.

Paolo was beloved of many Italian Princes, and especially of the Duca d'Urbino; he was also especially esteemed by several Cardinals; as well as by Pope Pius V., who offered, indeed, to endow him with a rich benefice, if he would don the robes of the Church. Paolo refused this offer; preferring to indulge in a less rigid mode of life, and not choosing to be restricted by the sanctity of clerical rules. It came to pass once in Venice, that Paolo Boi met with a stranger, with whom he strove in Chess, and to whom he unaccountably lost. Having then subsequently examined the play minutely, and finding that he certainly ought to have won, Paolo was smitten with wonder to perceive that he had been defeated contrary to all rule; and thence naturally suspected that his adversary had used magic art, or by some other supernatural means thrown a shade upon the Syracusian's power of sight. Hereupon, Paolo, being of good and virtuous habits of life and possessing a very rich "corona" of Paternosters, the holy reliques of departed saints, took a fancy to play Chess once more with his late victor, first arming himself with this sacred chaplet, and also devoutly receiving the sacraments both of Penitence and the Eucharist. Hereby he conquered his adversary altogether; who, indeed, addressed the Syracusian, in the act of surrender, in these words—"Thine is more potent than mine."

When the Syracusian was in Spain, he had the gratification of playing Chess in the presence of Philip the Second; who rewarded him with a pension of five hundred scudi per annum, charged upon certain revenues derived from Syracusian cities, and to be paid by them to Paolo. Boi in early life displayed great personal valour, and love of adventure. He testified to Philip his wish to serve the King's brother, Don John of Austria, and the Spanish Monarch accordingly furnished him with written credentials in his own royal hand, worded in terms of the highest grace and favour. From this we know that Boi served the King as a military officer, and it is believed in several campaigns; but regarding the past, our Syracusian was ever of a taciturn disposition, permitting nothing to go forth. Paolo visited, among other countries, Portugal, and playing Chess there, with certain noble lords, won in a single day eight thousand scudi. He played also there with Sebastian, the King, who not only delighted much in the game, but was acknowledged to be himself a good Chess-player. Don Sebastian and the Syracusian frequently played as much as three or four hours at one time, and upon one occasion, it chanced that the King, playing in a standing posture, and Paolo Boi, keeling according to etiquette, with one knee upon a cushion (*un' origliere*); the latter was so fatigued with the length of time during which he had maintained this attitude, that he sought relief; observing which, the King assisted him with his own arm, to change his position, and to kneel upon the other knee.

When Kings thus publicly displayed their admiration of the Syracusian's talent, it is not much marvel that the chief lords of Sicily, Rome, Naples, and elsewhere, more than shared in the same feeling. Paolo forgot not to shew himself in the country of Hungary, where the Turks and Hungarians were wont to play Chess on horseback without Chess-board or pieces. The Syracusian dwelt twenty years in foreign countries; during which time his compatriots believed him dead. Returning then to Sicily, he yet could not rest tranquil, but was ever changing from place to place. Finally, being in Syracuse he went to Naples, at the pressing invitation of the Princess di Stigliano, who highly esteemed him; and in Naples, our Paolo was attacked with a certain disorder of the stomach, which removed him to a better world, in the year 1598, at above seventy years of age. His body was interred in the Church of San Francesco di Paoló; and

the funeral rites were conducted with sumptuous magnificence, in the presence of the Prince di Stigliano, and many other Neapolitan cavaliers and nobles.

I myself (*concludes Carrera*) knew Paolo in my youth, when at Palermo, in the year 1597. His head was then white as snow, but his appearance was brisk and gallant; being attired like a young man, in the gayest fashions of the age; and manifesting, with the dress, the caprices, also of youth. He was not the less adorned with the most estimable qualities; so chaste, and modest, he would never even marry a wife. He gave largely to the poor in alms, spent much in splendour and show, and affected the highest pomp and dignity. He heard Mass every day, always contributing munificently to the collection made by the priest; confessing himself, and regularly receiving the Sacrament. He was consequently much beloved by the devout. Paolo would never suffer his portrait to be taken; hence such likenesses as exist, must have been sketched without his knowledge. He was in height above the ordinary stature of men, but finely proportioned, and of handsome features. He was vivacious, prompt at reasoning, cheerful, and affable, with all persons. He left some writings on Chess, which I have never been able to see; and I have thought it right to give a full description of this great man, that his name may be known to posterity."

Truly a fine and noble creature was this Syracusian, and worthy, perhaps, above every other warrior, to stand forth in Chess-history, as the Hero of all time. Paolo, Boi was, indeed, not one of Carlyle's vividly depicted race of "Shams." He was not merely the learned doctor of an art, who can practise that one specific thing, and none other; whose slender soul dwells ever contentedly in its nutshell, and becomes irredeemably lost, should it be temporarily lifted into a larger circle. Paolo was a man of the world, a Chess-player, and a gentleman, in the best acceptation of the terms. With him, Chess was merely one of the numerous outlets of the brain; wherein

mental power delights to shew its superiority over surrounding clay-clods. Paolo Boi was a warrior, a student, a man of letters;—to the poor, an ever bounteous friend—with the rich, most chivalrously gallant. With all, be it summed up, the pious Syracusian had sufficient courage not to be ashamed of his Maker.

The religious faith of Boi, as developed in his romantic Chess-encounter with the assumed fiend or magician, is a curious trait of character, highly natural in a temperament so ardent, and in an organization fashioned and matured in the "Sunny South." The manner in which the Syracusian "walks in" to the wizard, by the aid of his own more potent charm (the bits of holy bones, or whatever else might form its elements), is quite as it should be, and *all over admirable*. Satan tries to "take a rise" out of our champion, but goes back to his darkness howling. There is a beautiful grandeur of simplicity in the possessing so firm an assurance of one's own pre-eminence, as to entertain honestly the conviction that successful rivalry can be based but upon the supernatural and the unhallowed. Alas! for the printing-press, which has disencumbered our souls of so many happy illusions! In the nineteenth century we have nothing of the sort to fall back upon, and when beaten at Chess can plead no stronger excuse to ourselves than "headache." Such a feeling as this of Messer Paolo Boi's, we hold to be assuredly the loftiest pitch to which real Chess-faith can soar!

An incidental reflection presents itself as interesting to those who love to watch the workings of the vital spark, which dwells in frail mortality. From the constant patronage of Chess evinced by Philip, one can hardly believe him to have been the gloomy bigot portrayed by

every historian ; though still the fact may not be contradicted. Be the love of Chess, then, to his memory, the one redeeming trait—the solitary humanizing point—which ALL, even the worst of us, we trust and believe, possess. The very speckled toad, we learn, bears a jewel in its head, though our dim eyes may not see it bodily. The mode in which Paolo is to receive his pension, we like hugely. The Monarch quarters the recipient, in the highest style of financial skill, upon his native city, Syracuse ; instead of keeping quarter day at Madrid. “We hear and we obey,” was, doubtless, the response tendered by the slavish Sicilians to the royal mandate. The stroke is worthy of the biggest-bearded Oriental despot that ever sported turban of sacred green. A second amusing bit of King-craft presents itself in the miraculous condescension of Don Sebastian, the chivalrous ruler of Portugal, who, when poor Boi has all but lost the use of *half his understanding*, by kneeling for several hours consecutively, absolutely demeans himself to the point of tendering his own sacred right-hand digits, that his fellow King, the Sovereign of the Chess-field, may arise—and kneel upon t’other knee ! The kings of the earth, in latter generations, would have thought but little of handing Paolo a chair. As our right dear friend, St. Amant, has so well remarked upon this very passage of history, “people who have been kneeling down before kings, now arise of themselves !”

THE LIGHT AND LUSTRE OF CHESS!—Our story is done, our tale is told ; and this brilliant recollection of the past fades away like the mists of June at sunrise. Centuries have revolved, seasons have passed away, revolutions swept over Naples and Calabria, and the graves of the



great, whose deeds we have just brought to view, lie hidden from the traveller's ken. Light and Lustre ! Glory and Splendour of our Kingly Recreation ! Were not these titles well bestowed ?—fairly and honourably won—and as gallantly maintained ? They were ; and fame and name thus held though life, shall never pass away, while the chronicles of Chess endure in the soul of the enthusiast. Paolo and Leonardo, like Castor and Pollux, reign as the two bright stars in the history of Chess, with which no third immortal may pretend to vie. They shine out from the age in which they breathed, as pillars of flame in the desert of life, and mark the way for the humble pilgrim seeking to bend him lowly at Caissa's shrine. Beacons are they to light the haven for the bark ; eternal examples of the noble and the great—the excellent and the chivalrous:—not to be profaned by the shallow sneer of the scorning fool, glorying in his folly, but to be thought upon, and pondered over, and received into the innermost hearts of those chosen spirits in the cause, who have feeling to conceive—souls to sympathize with—enthusiasm to enshrine—and intellect to comprehend their deeds of great, and brave, and glorious daring. Light and Lustre of Chess ! Paolo of Syracuse—Leonardo of Italy !—be your names immortal !

# THE BATTLES OF M'DONNELL AND DE LA BOURDONNAIS.\*

---

"The splendors of the firmament of time  
May be eclipsed—but are extinguished not.  
Like stars, to their appointed height they climb,  
And death is a low mist, which cannot blot  
The brightness it may veil."

SHELLEY.

ALL the world—at least all the world we care about upon the present occasion, the Chess world—has heard of the Chess encounters of De la Bourdonnais and M'Donnell. The battle has been sung by Mery in French, by D'Arblay in English. The games themselves have been printed in several different European languages, and have become a code of precedents, like the famed Pandects of Justinian, by the light of which future players may walk safely through almost all the dark mazes of the Sacred Grove—if they have but the intellect to understand, and the memory to apply these splendid examples of Chess-play to the varied situations which arise during the progress of an actual game.

\* This paper was first published in the *Chess Player's Chronicle*, 1843,

But something more yet remains to be spoken respecting this memorable contest, and therefore do we think fit humbly to consecrate one of our own especial essays thus to the memory of the two great departed heroes. Be it our labour of love, on the present occasion, to write on the strife historically, depicting several of its more interesting features minutely, accurately, and critically. We are proud of the name of our M'Donnell, snatched from us so prematurely by cruel fate. England is proud, too, of the fame of De la Bourdonnais, for her green turf covers his ashes. Of either one of these renowned Chess-artists, well may his country say with Shelley (speaking of Keats)—

— “till the future dares  
Forget the past, his fate and fame shall be  
An echo and a light unto eternity.”

We cannot, however, admit any real difference of country or nation to exist as regards Chess-players. We recognise the kingdom of Chess one and indivisible, and no other. Let the actors on the world's poor stage of crowns, and titles, and gold, and courts, divide the earth's surface into little patches of garden ground; calling one portion France, and another England,—and a third Italy; but let us maintain the integrity of our noble MIND-KINGDOM in its hallowed universality. All Chess-players, black, white, or brown, are brothers of one common nation—bound together by the one indissoluble tie, and utterly regardless, beyond that, of the mere names and distinctions of birth-place, language, habits, and manners. Our country—the mighty kingdom of Chess!—comprises the four quarters of the terrestial globe; and our sole acknowledged monarch is THE BEST PLAYER for the time being.

We have been irresistibly led into positing this preliminary observation, by a phrase from the pen of a French writer on Chess, M. Doazan, at page 162 of the *Palamède* for 1843; in which that respected contributor laments that nothing remains of De la Bourdonnais, beyond "quelques parties recueillies par nos adversaires!" We disclaim the term. We, the English, are NOT your "adversaires," messieurs les Français. We are your friends—your brothers. Let us then for the future mutually acknowledge the fraternal tie, and disclaim all invidious distinctions—at least as far as Chess goes.

It may seem as if the details of the Chess-strife about to be narrated would be best introduced by full biographical sketches of the two combatants—the Hector and Achilles of the field. But I have thought that this would lead us too far from our subject. The Chess-lives of De la Bourdonnais and M'Donnell should form separate papers. They have yet to be portrayed at the length they deserve. I shall, then, upon the present occasion, pass lightly over the antecedents, in order to have full space and scope to illustrate my more immediate theme. A very few words, then, respecting the "personnel" of each of the two chiefs, before we behold them opposed to each other on Caissa's field, within the walls of the Westminster Chess Club.

The early part of the present century saw the sceptre of European Chess wielded by M. Deschapelles. For many years this great master reigned unrivalled; giving, in fact, at least the Pawn to all who presented themselves, but there arose upon the Chess horizon one bright star—which, warmed into life by the beams of its parent sun, at length vied with, if it did not eclipse, the elder luminary. De la Bourdonnais was the pupil—the protégé—the

adopted Chess-child of Deschapelles; could he have sat in the porch of a more inspired teacher?

It was about 1824 that Deschapelles tacitly retired from the Chess-field, declaring De la Bourdonnais his successor. Other renowned players at that time shone in Paris, as Boncourt, Mouret, Le Petit Juif, and a score more, but all yielded to the power of De la Bourdonnais. He came to England, and proved himself the finest player our country had seen since Philidor. Our first practitioner delightedly avowed they had found at last their Chess-Chief. All presented themselves in the lists, and all were beaten. England had not a man who could fairly hold his own against the redoubted Gaul; and De la Bourdonnais may be said to have walked over the course. He returned to Paris, avowedly the first player in Europe; and well do I remember in my early Chess days, that his name was one in the metropolitan Chess Clubs which amateurs were wont to swear by. De la Bourdonnais continued to play, and as he himself told me, to improve, until 1834, when he paid his next visit to England. How had Chess fared here in the interim?

The strong band of players, who had greeted De la Bourdonnais on his first coming, were dispersed by various causes, upon all the winds of heaven. Death, and worse than death had thinned our ranks. Cochrane had left London for India; Mercier and Parkinson had retired from the lists; Brand's fine intellect was quenched: Lewis and Fraser had given up playing difficult matches—content to rest on their well-won laurels. M'Donnell was hailed as Albion's champion. Let us glance at his claims to that proud title.

Alexander M'Donnell had quietly worked his way to the

very apex of Chess skill, distancing all his competitors. A long series of games with Mr. Lewis (the veteran giving McDonnell the Pawn) had completed his studies; and the secession of his master from the arena, left the pupil to reign without the trouble of conquest. Mr. Lewis discontinued difficult games, and refused more than one invitation in my hearing to play on even terms with his quondam pupil. About 1833, by the active exertions of a few Chess amateurs, was founded the Westminster Chess Club, in Bedford Street, Covent Garden. Here M'Donnell pitched his flag as the King of English Chess—here he played with all comers, and as a necessary consequence, gave odds to all. The first metropolitan players were members of the Westminster Chess Society, and agreed in confessing M'Donnell's superiority. He gave at least the Pawn to all the first players of the time, (Messrs. Lewis, Mercier, Fraser, and Parkinson having ceased to be players, simply because not playing) and even at the odds of the Pawn there were not more than half-a-dozen who could make a stand against him. Such was M'Donnell in 1834, when La Bourdonnais came to London with the roses of June.

On the arrival of the Gallic paladin, every one was of course anxious to make a match between these mighty competitors. M'Donnell declared himself ready to play upon any terms, and in any manner. He was avowedly the only Englishman prepared to measure himself with the French chief. A match of twenty-one games (exclusive of drawn games) was arranged to be played by these two rivals for fame. This match was not lightly or easily adjusted, many details being to be settled. The kind assistance of Mr. Greenwood Walker at length smoothed down all obstacles, and placed the parties "*vis-à-vis*" at the Chess-board. A word on the Mr. Walker here quoted.

Mr. William Greenwood Walker, himself but a very moderate Chess-player, (related to me only in name,) was the most enthusiastic Chess-recorder I have ever had the honour to know. He cared little to play himself, but delighted to be always at M'Donnell's elbow, to record his victory; like one of the bards of old, ever by the side of his Chief, to hymn the song of triumph in his praise. Mr. Walker took down the whole of the games played by M'Donnell and La Bourdonnais, and printed them, with many others played by the former, in a well known octavo volume. Without him, these fine games would have been lost for ever. Great, then, is the obligation we are all under to his name, for thus constantly attending at his post, the scribe, the herald of the war. It is no light thing to sit daily five or six hours, during a period of months, to watch games playing, and write them down. Mr. William Greenwood Walker has been taken from us long since. He died full of years. We could well have spared a better—aye, *many* a better—man.

Mr. M'Donnell was the Chess-divinity of Mr. Greenwood Walker's worship, and the neophyte was never far absent, when the "padrone" was in the field: It was laughable to see the old gentleman so constantly and pertinaciously fixed at M'Donnell's right hand, with "spectacles on nose," and paper and pencil in fingers; never speaking, and hardly daring to breathe, lest he should cause the conceptions of his master to miscarry. When the game ran in M'Donnell's favour, Mr. Walker's features were lighted up into a smile of benignity;—when fortune frowned on his hero (and she *would* frown sometimes, particularly when the rival, who courted her favours, was La Bourdonnais)—Mr. Walker looked, I will not say daggers,

but assuredly pitchforks on the Gaul, and on all around, who appeared to sympathize with France. Mr. Walker was a humourist in some little points, but, as I have said, the most useful man that was ever member of a Chess-club.

I intend to be the more particular in presenting what may be termed the statistics of the games played by M'Donnell and De la Bourdonnais, as they have been on many occasions so erroneously stated. Writers of these latter times have assumed that they were all comprised within two, three, or four matches. Be it mine to state the exact and full truth. During the time they were playing, I visited the club daily, and took some of the games down, move by move, as they were played; relieving my worthy namesake at his post. At the close of each day's play, the notes of Mr. Greenwood Walker were kindly placed at my disposal, and I was thus enabled to get the games in a complete shape. I have them all by me, as I wrote them out at the time—in the exact order they were played, and classed according to the actual matches of which each one formed a part. An extraordinary error has been committed by certain scribes in putting Mr. M'Donnell down, without "why or wherefore," as a Scottish Knight. Mr. M'Donnell was an Irishman, born at Belfast, where his father, Dr. M'Donnell, a physician, resides up to this present moment of writing (October, 1843).

It is worth noticing, that in the playing of important matches, care should be taken to prevent spectators from pressing closely around the players. A space should be roped off with a silk cord, or some such protector, and the naturally anxious friends of the parties should, with certain necessary exceptions, be content to watch the progress



of the game on a duplicate Chess-board in another room. During the first games played by De la Bourdonnais and M'Donnell, the latter especially suffered from the very inconsiderate crowding around of spectators; to which De la Bourdonnais was comparatively indifferent, from the circumstance of having been more accustomed to the varied accompaniments and forms of sound with Chess. He, who had played in public for so many years in Paris, might well feel equally cool, studying his moves amid the spray of Niagara, or the quiet of a hermit's cell. I am bound to say we have greatly improved in this branch of Chess-manners, and may now more reasonably feel that we deserve the title constantly given us in France, of "the best lookers on in the world." Such was not, however, always the case. I recollect personally witnessing the *entrée* once of one of my dear countrymen into the club-room while M'Donnell and De la Bourdonnais were engaged in one of their most trying positions. Our friend first shook hands with each of them, and then thrusting his figure between them, took a deliberate survey of the board, resting with his two hands in the middle of the pieces. However, after merely half a dozen questions, such as "Is this your first game to-day?—That Rook seems in the devil's own mess," and "whose move is it?"—he suffered the game kindly to proceed: for which the parties felt doubtless due obligation.

The first match, then, was made between De la Bourdonnais and M'Donnell, of 21 games; all the games to be played out exclusive of draws; and the two candidates for Chess honours sat down to their first game in the presence of a large concourse of amateurs; the scene of action being the Westminster Club. This match commenced in June, and was finished during July, 1834. The combatants gen-

erally met about 12 or 1 o'clock, and played till 6 or 7, several times adjourning a game till next meeting. They played nearly every day, Sundays excepted.

Many of the games lasted long—long hours; but the exact time of duration of each was not noted down. I have seen M'Donnell an hour and a half, and even more upon one move; and I once timed La Bourdonnais fifty-five minutes. M'Donnell was incomparably the slower player, consuming, I calculated on an average, three fourths or very nearly so, of the whole time occupied, on his own moves. He was uniformly tranquil, patient, good-tempered, and silent, whether studying his own move, or awaiting his turn to play. His adversary, on the other hand, with the mercurial temperament of his lively country, talked and laughed a good deal at intervals, when winning, and swore tolerably round oaths in a pretty audible voice, when fate ran counter to his schemes. La Bourdonnais also lost temper, occasionally, under the protracted calculations of his cooler adversary; and expressed his dislike at the great time they occupied, by sundry very plain gestures and shrugs. As La Bourdonnais spoke no English, and M'Donnell no French, we may safely take it they had little conversation together. The word "check" was, I believe, nearly the sole phrase that ever passed between them; "mate" being seldom waited for, or when given, expressed simply by a friendly smile. Rochefoucauld well says, that in the misfortunes of our best friends there is a something not unpleasing to us! Rochefoucauld must have been a Chess-player!

The move in the first game was cast lots for, and won by De la Bourdonnais. The game was drawn, after a most arduous struggle. According to the English law, a drawn

game being no game in certain respects, De la Bourdonnais again played first.

The second game was drawn! The third game was drawn! In each of these three games the French champion had attacked with what we term the Queen's Pawn two opening, in different modifications. The parties rested on their arms, and the interest of friends naturally increased as to the future. These games had each lasted nearly sixty moves—a very unusual length. M'Donnell's friends began to think De la Bourdonnais had been overrated, and M'Donnell, himself told me, at this point, that whereas he had been nervous at the commencement of the match, he now felt confident of ultimate success. "De la Bourdonnais has had the move," said he, "each time, and yet has done nothing. When the move is mine, and I am able to attack with my Bishop's Gambit and Evans game,—then you'll see!"—"But perhaps he may play King's Pawn one," remarked a bystander. M'Donnell replied that he wished this, as he had a new mode of manœuvring to meet that *début*, adding, that win or lose, nothing should tempt him, himself, to play so dry a game as King's Pawn one; and this he ever most nobly and gallantly persisted in.

La Bourdonnais, on his part, appeared to be staggered and surprised at his vivid attacks having been so completely foiled. "M'Donnell is the greatest player I ever encountered," said he to me; "but patience, *nous verrons!*"

The fourth game De la Bourdonnais opened "en Giuoco, Piano;" caught his adversary at a disadvantage, brought up all his force of skill to the calculation, and mated M'Donnell the 31st move. "Che va PIANO, va sano," laughed the Gaul.

But M'Donnell won the 5th and 6th games, and was thus the victor on the first half dozen parties of the match.

Too much detail were tedious—De la Bourdonnais threw his whole soul into the struggle, and of the 21 games, comprising the first match, won no less than 16 to 5! Other four games were drawn, making the total number played in this match 25. The friends of M'Donnell were, however, far more dismayed at the great disparity at the close, than was he himself. He frankly told me he considered the Frenchman the better player; but believed his own powers were sufficient to come up with him in time.

A great number of the games in this match consisted of Queen's Gambits, played by De la Bourdonnais; in which M'Donnell persisted, most erroneously, in taking the offered Gambit Pawn, and thus exposing himself needlessly to a murderous attack. With the powers of genius, he possessed also its firmness, amounting too often to mere obstinacy. Nothing could induce him to evade the Queen's Gambit. It is worthy of remark, that M'Donnell introduced his Bishop's Gambit three times during the match, and always lost it. De la Bourdonnais was the first to shew us that the real defence of this game turns on second player's not regarding the being compelled to move his King to the Queen's square, at a certain point of the opening.

I find among my Chess-papers a letter of Mr. M'Donnell's, addressed to me during the playing of this match, in answer to one in which I had entreated him to change his mode of meeting the Queen's Gambit, and King's Pawn one game; from which document I here extract:—

\* \* \* \* \* "I am much obliged to you for your very friendly letter. \* \* \* \* \* I acknowledge I am sensitive and nervous in playing, more on account of the kind partiality of friends, than from personal anxiety about the games. I cannot get over this, and I fear it will be fatal to my success. Let us not, however, underrate the Frenchman's powers. He is the most finished player of the age, and all I can expect is to play up to him after some practice. The openings may not be happy, but how can you mend them; I broke down in my Bishop's Gambit, the game of all others I most relied upon, and possibly it would be the same with any other attacking game. The fact is, practice of a superior kind is indispensable to form a first-rate player. I am sure La B. will play K. P. one sq. in all the games, until he gets the ascendancy. You will think it odd, but I cannot mend my opening. \* \* \* On the whole the K. P. one sq. is a most perplexing game, and I think all the ways laid down in the book, give the second player the best game," \* \* &c.

Reference to the games themselves will best prove the fallacy in which M'Donnell indulged, as to the King's Pawn one game. He had struck out a sort of pet scheme, from which nothing could induce him to depart. This turned on bringing out his Queen's Knight, first to Rook's third, and then to Q. B.'s second; not regarding the being forced to play his King. He did not sufficiently observe that his centre was weak, through the King's Pawn being so far advanced, and would not admit the great force of La Bourdonnais's game, consequent partly upon the new move the latter had introduced of playing K. B. P. one square. These technicalities can require no apology on my part, being addressed exclusively to players of a certain degree of force. Too late, M'Donnell gave way to the counsel of his friends, and we find him finally shaping the King's Pawn one game so as to come fully equal out of the opening. I am far from seeking to detract from the fame of De la Bourdonnais, and honestly believe him to have been

the stronger player of the two; yet if we deduct from the score the Queen's Gambits, and King's Pawn one games, in which M'Donnell, through persisting in risking openings rotten for him at their very cores, gave away gratuitously an advantage fully equal to a Pawn;—I say deduct all such from the reckoning, and the balance would shew quite a different figure. In comparing the two players, it is quite fair to dwell upon this point. The match was, however, over, and our champion fairly beaten. The way in which M'Donnell met his defeat was to demand his revenge, and a second match was instantly made, to consist of nine games, exclusive of draws. The second match was played in July, 1834; in fact I may state once for all, that the various matches I am about to enumerate, of which the one celebrated war was composed, were all contested during the summer and autumn of 1834.

M'Donnell commenced the first game of the second match by playing boldly the Evans Gambit. It was new to De la Bourdonnais, and our countryman won the game. The French champion told me that he here purposely declined playing again for two or three days, during which time he sedulously analysed the novel *debüt*, and made up his mind upon its merits, both as to its strength and weakness. De la Bourdonnais was not a man to be caught tripping twice. His great success in the first match made him perhaps play with less energy in the second, which was won by M'Donnell—five to four—and no draws. The British player naturally gained in confidence from this very honourable result; and the third match was looked forward to by the friends of the parties with renewed interest.

The third match comprised in all twelve games, there being one draw; and was stipulated to consist of eleven. It

was won by De la Bourdonnais, six games to five ; and this difference is so slight, that again is M'Donnell entitled to all honour for his energetic rallying after the primary severe defeat.

M'Donnell, always full of enterprise in Chess, having the move in this match, commenced the first game as a Muzio Gambit, and won it after a long and hard struggle. He attempted in the fourth game to play the Queen's Gambit himself, for the first time, but his wily foe answered the move of Queen's Pawn two, with K. P. one ; and thus declined the cartel offered. The conquering game of this match (each party had won five) was a spirited Bishop's Gambit proffered by M'Donnell, and surrendered only after a hard fight. Some of the best judges considered M'Donnell's openings too hazardous. In the third match he had five times played the King's Gambit !

As the contest went on between these renowned artists, it was curious to mark in how much bolder a style they played, than in the introductory games. Like two haughty knights throwing away helm and shield, each appeared to disdain defence, provided he could strike his opponent a home blow with sword or axe. Increased brilliancy was developed, and the spectators saw with surprise that even the sacrifice of a piece was not counted much, provided the repayment of the obligation seemed probable. The word ran throughout the club, " This is indeed Chess !" —In reviewing the games it is astonishing to see how few things are overlooked. Still, the surly critic may exult in detecting occasionally a miscalculation ; and I have heard it well remarked, that a player of equal force in other respects, but who in a hundred games could never be once

found to stumble, would be capable of giving De la Bourdonnais the Knight! A profound admirer of Philidor, I own I do not see in his recorded games any efforts of Chess skill superior to those developed by M'Donnell and his compeer.

The fourth match was to consist of 11 games; and of these De la Bourdonnais won 8 to 3, thus resuming in some respects his original high "vantage ground." This match yielded also the large proportion of seven drawn games: thus making 18 in all. We find De la Bourdonnais coming out in the fourth match for the first time with the Evans Gambit; playing that attack six several times, and thus turning his rival's own weapons against him. It would seem that conscious of his superiority in that particular *debüt*, he, suffered his terrible Queen's Gambit purposely to rest awhile.

Twelve games constitute the fifth match, one only being drawn. Of the remaining 11, La Bourdonnais wins seven to four; a most decisive victory. The play in this match was of the same brilliant kind as in the former, both combatants frequently using the Evans assault; on which splendid opening so much light was thrown by these matches, both as to its strongest methods of attack and defence.

The sixth and last match was never finished—nine games only being played, of which M'Donnell won five to four. The match was suspended, owing to the Frenchman's being obliged to leave London for Paris on business, and his opponent being equally forced by circumstances to make a visit to his native town, Belfast. These honoured rivals for Chess-fame never again met. Mr. M'Donnell died the following year, to the irreparable loss of the Chess-world, at



the early age of 37 ; and his conqueror has since followed him to the grave, aged only 43 ;—by some extraordinary fatality, they were both interred in the grounds of the Kensall Green Cemetery. There are their battles over—there do they “sleep well,” in the peaceful and solemn union of the tomb.

“ Oh ! strict and close are the ties that bind  
In death the children of human kind.  
Yea, stricter and closer than those of life ;  
’Tis a neighbourhood that knows no strife,  
They are noiselessly gathered—friend and foe—  
To the still and dark assemblies below.  
Without a frown or a smile they meet,  
Each pale and calm in his winding sheet ;  
In that sullen home of peace and gloom  
Crowded, like guests in a banquet room.

It is not my intention here to go at great length into a dissertation on the relative merits of these mighty Chess Champions. The games are in print ; let them speak for themselves. Of the last twelve games played, M’Donnell won no less than eight ; from which at least this inference may be gathered, that on a second eighty, the disproportion would have been less at the close. But it does not fairly follow, that the presumption is M’Donnell would have been the winner in a second eighty games ; because it may be justly conceived that De la Bourdonnais relaxed in his efforts, however slightly, from his having proved his superiority. A winner always plays to the greatest advantage, having, in case of defeat, a long line of conquests on which to retreat. De la Bourdonnais disliked trouble, and took all things as lightly as the world would let him.

Deducting, as the candid observer must do, some part of the discredit of M'Donnell's defeat, on the score of his pertinacity in playing two openings, the King's Pawn one, and Queen's Gambit, with the very elements of failure entailed in their constitution, we still cheerfully admit the superiority of De la Bourdonnais. His blows are dealt with greater vigour; his stratagems are better timed; his powers of counter-attack more forcible; his judgment of position sounder. In the one point, the managing of Pawns at the close of a game, I fancy the palm must be yielded to M'Donnell; the latter also conducts a difficult defence with greater patience, and wider resource under extreme pressure. This was in the temperament of the *mén*. Some of the games drawn by M'Donnell, apparently against all human probability, are among the finest specimens of Chess-defence ever imagined by the brain of genius.

Had De la Bourdonnais and M'Donnell played a second eighty-five games, I believe the star of the former would have still been in the ascendant, in something like the proportions of forty-five or fifty, against the minority. Had they played, however, 500 games, I think there was sufficient Chess in our countryman to bring him honourably and well up to De la Bourdonnais. The Frenchman had undergone a drilling, the advantages of which M'Donnell never enjoyed. Deschapelles had played many hundred games with De la Bourdonnais, though chiefly at that curious variety of Chess known as the game of the Pawns; while M'Donnell had never before played on equal terms with an artist of his force. De la Bourdonnais had therefore attained that high "pride of pitch," which can only result from repeated trials with a superior player. The grave, however, has closed upon these two great Chess-artists; and

all speculation upon what would, might, could, or should have been, becomes indeed "vanity and vexation of spirit."

I have said that M'Donnell was by far the more laboured player of the two : dwelling on the moves, occasionally, till the sense of sight in the looker-on ached with the sickening of hope and expectation. Latterly, however, M'Donnell improved considerably in this respect, playing much quicker than in the commencement. No greater proof could be adduced that his full force was never attained throughout these matches.

Proceeding now to sum up—I find that, according to my memorandums, the total numbers of games played was 85, of which number there were 13 drawn, De la Bourdonnais winning 46 to 26. I have stated elsewhere that these matches comprised 88 games. There is, indeed, a slight doubt as to the exact number played in the last match; such doubt involving, however, only one or two games; and therefore hardly worth naming. The papers of Mr. William Greenwood Walker would perhaps have afforded, on reference, mathematical accuracy upon the point, but he too has "shuffled off this mortal coil" since the year 1834. My own memorandums, made at the time, give the numbers I have quoted.

These games, taken as a series, furnish some curious statistics, to be touched upon with advantage. I shall be brief, while I sketch their most prominent points.

Is the first move an advantage, or not? Perhaps some light may be here thrown on this important question. Of the 72 won games (the draws are out of the question) I find that the first move wins 39 times, and loses 33. But still I am not prepared to say that the first move is an advantage, unless, in answer to King's Pawn two, second

player likewise comes forth with King's Pawn two;—or replies with Queen's Pawn two, to Queen's Pawn two. Several new openings have appeared on the scene since 1834, and the second player may now assuredly meet the move of King's Pawn two, by playing King's Pawn two also, with far greater chance of success than he could have done before the period at which M'Donnell played. Still I think first player has a slight advantage (besides the being able to ensure equality of opening, and to choose his *debüt*, if, in reply to his leading move of King's Pawn two, second player comes out with King's Pawn two also; but if the latter play King's Pawn only one square, or Queen's Bishop's Pawn two squares, the first move is altogether valueless, and the combatants commence on terms of strict equality. The dry character of the games, however, mostly springing from the King's Pawn one opening, justly makes amateurs prefer incurring the very slight risk involved by the adoption of a bolder course of action.

Of the thirteen drawn games, De la Bourdonnais had the move in eight; and his opponent of course played first in the remaining five. Three of the draws were King's Pawn one opening, De la Bourdonnais being consequently second player, since M'Donnell never played the King's Pawn one *debüt* throughout the matches. Three of these thirteen were also Evans Gambits, in two of which De la Bourdonnais had first move. Three were Queen's Pawn two openings, all commenced by the Frenchman: one a King's Gambit played by M'Donnell, and one a Queen's Gambit by his adversary; the remaining two parties being both a species of *Giuoco Piano* led off by the Gaul.

Let us now analyze the characters of the seventy-two

won games, dropping the drawn games altogether, as done with, at least for the moment.

Of fifteen Queen's Gambits played by De la Bourdonnais, he won eleven and lost only four. M'Donnell persisted in taking the Gambit Pawn, and thus gave himself over, bound hand and foot, to his enemy. The Queen's Gambit ought to be constantly evaded, and not accepted. The sacrificed Pawn is a "Greek gift" indeed!

The King's Pawn one opening yields us twenty specimens of won games; all played by De la Bourdonnais; he winning thirteen to seven.

In the Evans Gambit, the French paladin proved himself equally successful. Of twenty games he here again wins thirteen to seven. Indeed, De la Bourdonnais here perhaps may be said to win his brightest laurels, since the opening was altogether new to him; while M'Donnell had practised it (giving odds it is true) for several years. The Paris Champion invented several novel methods of attack in this fine game; but of twenty games played at the Evans opening now, by two quite first rate-players, it is certain the attack would have but little chance, a complete system of defence having been primarily discovered during the last eight or nine years; consequent, it must be ever admitted, upon our experience acquired from the games before us. De la Bourdonnais played first in fourteen of these twenty games. The first move won no less than fifteen of these twenty games, thus proving the once potency of this now somewhat *passée* attack.

Of five regular Bishop's Gambits led off by the London Champion, we find him losing—five! De la Bourdonnais was far too wily to risk this treacherous and superficial *débüt* on his own part. These games first established the correct defence to the Bishop's Gambit.

Seven won games only result from the *Giuoco Piano* ; and these are mostly of an irregular class. Of these seven, M'Donnell wins five. It seems here as if he were playing on known ground. De la Bourdonnais has the move in five of the seven games. Of the two games begun by M'Donnell, he won one and lost one. In both these specimens he follows Philidor's plan, of sallying forth with King's Bishop on the second move, instead of Knight.

Three won games occur, all commenced by M'Donnell, of the family of the *Muzio Gambit*. Of these, our countrymen wins two, and loses one. All three rest upon that splendid variation of the *Muzio* first introduced by Mr. M'Donnell, which turns on bringing out Q. Kt. to Q. B.'s third, in preference to Castling when second player pushes Pawn on K. Kt. De la Bourdonnais gave unqualified praise to this original and magnificent attack.

Our number of seventy-two won games are made up in tale by two ordinary King's Gambits, both commenced by Mr. M'Donnell, of which each party gained one.

And here rests my pen, fearing to wear out the patience of my kindly readers. It was a custom of old, among certain warlike tribes and nations, that when a chief fell in battle, his followers reverentially marched past the place of his rest, in single file, each man dropping a stone on the grave, and thus finally raising a lofty mound to the memory of the departed great. I have cast my pebble upon the pile.

THE END.

---

Myers and Co., Printers, 37, King Street, Covent Garden.

LATEST PUBLICATIONS ON  
CHESS,

BY

MR. GEORGE WALKER.

---

To be had of all Booksellers.

---

CHESS MADE EASY ;

Intended as a First Book. Pocket size. New edition, 1850.

---

THE ART OF CHESS-PLAY :

A New Treatise on the Game of Chess. Fourth edition.

---

JAENISCH'S LARGE WORK ON  
CHESS OPENINGS.

Translated from the original; with Notes and Remarks 8vo.

---

CHESS STUDIES;

COMPRISING

**One Thousand Games actually played by the First Players of  
all time ;**

Including all the Games extant of Philidor, La Bourdonnais, and Mc  
Donnell; with numerous Games played by Messrs. Cochrane, St. Amant,  
Sarratt, Staunton, Lewis, Kieseritzky, Boncourt, Mouret, Szen, Von  
De Lasa, Jaenisch, Petroff, &c., and the Games of all the great Matches  
by Correspondence. Royal 8vo.



BOUND BY  
WESTLEYS & CO.  
FRIAR STREET,  
LONDON.



